

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

“The lesson writ in red since first time ran,
A hunter hunting down the beast in man ;
That till the chasing out of its last vice,
The flesh was fashioned but for sacrifice.”

GEORGE MEREDITH



Ridolus M. 11
Excrata Deas hominique Superbia, nulli
Hec placco, placco dum nimis ipsa mibi.

PRIDE.

THE
SEVEN DEADLY SINS

BY

FREDERICK ROGERS

A. H. BULLEN

47, GREAT RUSSELL STREET, LONDON, W.C.

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TO

ARTHUR C. HAYWARD

WITH WHOM I HAVE READ MANY BOOKS
AND FROM WHOM I HAVE HAD MUCH FRIENDSHIP
I DEDICATE THESE PAGES

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INTRODUCTION

THE business of literature is the presentation of life, all true literature resolves itself into that. No presentation of life is complete without its sins, and every master of literary art has known it, from the poet King of Israel to Robert Browning. The imagination of the Middle Ages, in many ways more virile and expansive than our own, had a strong grasp of this fact, and realised that it is the sense of fault or error that lies at the root of every forward movement, that there is no real progress unless it is accompanied by a sense of sin. Other terms may be used to describe the dynamic power which has moved societies or individuals from lower ideals to higher, but if we get beyond words to things, we see the sense of the defective character, the unrealised ideal, always and everywhere as the moving force.

To the Catholic Church, touched as it often has been and not always to its detriment, with pagan mysticism, the problem of evil was associated with a mystical number; and the succeeding pages are an endeavour to trace the various presentations of the Seven Deadly Sins as they have been given by men of powerful imagination, or profound insight, at different periods in our literary history. If the sins in their mystical enumeration no longer keep the place that they once held in Catholic theology, they nevertheless still represent

with wonderful accuracy what appear to be permanent defects in the human character. They express the experience of simpler, more strenuous, and in some ways wiser ages than our own, when men stood closer to the foundation facts of life, and saw its grim and awful shadows where we only see its littleness and meanness. But some of them saw the sunshine as well as the shadow, and in the sunshine found the key to all its problems.

As this book is written for ordinary readers who may care about English Literature and English Life, and as it travels over three or four centuries of that literature, I have ventured here and there to modernise the ancient prose and verse. From the standpoint of pure scholarship this is open to criticism. The general reader, I think, will be grateful. With the exception of the passage from the prologue to Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales;" which is taken from Charles Cowden Clarke, all the modernising is my own, though I owe a line or two here and there to Professor Edward Arber's version of William Dunbar's "Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins." I felt very much as if I were committing sacrilege when I laid my hands on Dunbar's rugged, but magnificent, poetry, but Time robs us of many things, and Time is among the causes which prevent the general reader from appreciating as scholars can the beauties of William Dunbar.

I owe the fullest thanks to Mr. A. H. Bullen, and to the Rev. Father Robert Hugh Benson, of the Catholic Mission, Cambridge, for many valuable criticisms and suggestions.

“Philosophers have measured mountains
Fathomed the depths of seas, of states and kings ;
Walked with a staff to Heaven, and traced fountains ;
But there are two vast spacious things,
The which to measure it doth more behove ;
Yet few there are that sound them—Sin and Love.”

GEORGE HERBERT.

The Seven Deadly Sins.

1. Superbia (Pride)
2. Luxuria (Lechery)
3. Invidia (Envy)
4. Ira (Wrath)
5. Avaritia (Covetousness)
6. Gula (Gluttony)
7. Accidia (Sloth)

The Seven Chief Virtues.

1. Humilitas (Humility)
2. Castitas (Chastity)
3. Caritas (Love)
4. Patientia (Patience)
5. Eleemosyna (Bounty)
6. Abstinentia (Abstinence)
7. Vigilantia (Vigilance)

*The Seven Spiritual Works
of Mercy.*

1. To convert sinners
2. To instruct the ignorant
3. To counsel doubters
4. To comfort the sorrowful
5. To bear wrongs patiently
6. To forgive enemies
7. To pray for the living and the dead

*The Seven Corporal Works
of Mercy.*

1. To feed the hungry
2. To give drink to the thirsty
3. To clothe the naked
4. To shelter the homeless
5. To visit the sick
6. To visit the imprisoned
7. To bury the dead

*The Seven Gifts of the Holy
Ghost.*

1. Wisdom
2. Understanding
3. Counsel
4. Fortitude
5. Knowledge
6. Piety
7. The fear of God

*The Seven Penitential
Psalms.*

1. Psalm 6 : *Domine ne in furore*
2. Psalm 32 : *Beati quorum*
3. Psalm 38 : *Domine ne in furore*
4. Psalm 51 : *Miserere Mei Deus*
5. Psalm 102 : *Domine Exaudi*
6. Psalm 130 : *De Profundis*
7. Psalm 143 : *Domine Exaudi*

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS.

CHAPTER I.

The Sins and the Church.

IN all ancient religions and philosophies alike the number seven is chief among sacred or mystical numbers. “Man,” say the Chinese sacred books, “has seven material souls”; “man,” says the Buddhist philosopher, “is the representative of the great seven-stringed world-lyre.” Every quality, symbolic, mystical or material seems to have been ascribed to the number seven in ancient literature, but it is without either religious or moral significance until we meet it in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is still a mystical number there, but a change has passed over it which, if it has cast no light on the why and wherefore of its mysticism, has nevertheless given it a dignity, and sometimes a haunting charm, it did not possess in its earlier environment. William Ingpen, writing in 1624, says quaintly of the number, “It neither begetteth nor is begotten, this is its first divinity or perfection”; and Alexander Cruden, says, “It is also used in Scripture as a number of perfection.” As in the Hebrew Scripture, so in the doctrine and ritual of the Christian Church we may trace the influence of the mystic seven; and the form in which it stamped

itself most deeply upon the religious imagination of the Western World was that of the Seven Deadly Sins.

The sins are, Pride, Gluttony, Lust, Envy, Anger, Avarice, and Sloth, and regarding them from a purely ethical standpoint, it will be seen that they relate entirely to life and character, not to opinion or belief, and that any self-respecting pagan might have regarded them as deadly, though not, of course, in the same sense as the Catholic Church. They are not ecclesiastical, or "church-made" sins, they represent the defects of nature over which man has control, but to which any human being may be subject. Whether their mystical enumeration is of Christian or Pagan origin, it is not possible to say with any certainty. It is possible for such an enumeration to have had a purely literary or imaginative origin, and to have been accepted by the church, and incorporated with its doctrines, as a witness on man's side to God's revelation of righteousness. Whatever its origin, the Seven Deadly Sins represent the vices which from the beginning of time have made havoc of the noblest aspirations of humanity, and none knew this better than the poets and dramatists who have found in them a well-spring of moral, religious, and poetic inspiration for more than a thousand years. Given a conviction of their reality, and any man, whether priest, philosopher, or layman, with imagination and a keen sense of the paradoxes of life, could have given form and substance to those mysterious cancers of the soul.

The utterances of St. Augustine (A.D. 354-430), upon sin are clear and definite enough, and have been

adopted by St. Thomas Aquinas, and by Catholic theologians generally, as their foundation principles in dealing with this theme. "Any thought, word, or deed, against the law of God." "Let each look to his own soul; if it sins it dies, sin is the death of the soul." "It is the death of the soul to fall away from God." The great Bishop and Saint in his definition of venial and mortal sins, does not, however, give seven sins as being deadly, but three, "But they who think that all other sins are atoned for by almsgiving, yet have no doubt of three being deadly, and such as require to be punished by excommunication, until they be healed by a greater humility of penance—idolatry, unchastity, and murder." Scannell's Catholic Dictionary (ed. 1903) says that the Fathers of the Church used the terms venial and mortal sin in a different sense to that of later theologians, and quotes from Petavius:—"The Fathers meant, not as we do, those sins which deprive us of grace, but sins of an aggravated character, which were specially named in the canons, and synodical decrees, and which subjected anyone who was guilty of them to canonical penalties." To these they opposed the sins of daily life, "some of which we call mortal, and some of which we call venial." Development of doctrine has always been a principle of the Catholic faith, and the definition of sins mortal or venial as given by the Catholic Church to-day is much more logical and complete. The Church affirms that justification is a renewal of man's nature by the grace of Jesus Christ, and does not therefore admit that one who is in friend-

ship with God is guilty of acts which will place him in danger of eternal death. If then a soul is justified, that implies a passage from death unto life, from sin unto holiness. Nevertheless it does not fail to recognise in accordance with Scripture that none, not even the most holy, can escape or avoid sin entirely, unless by a special grace of God, which grace, it teaches, was accorded to the Blessed Virgin. This being so, it follows that sins are obviously of different magnitude and character, some being in their nature mortal, or deadly, and some being venial; some being of the body and some of the soul. A deliberate rejection of faith springing as it usually does from pride, is a spiritual sin which would be regarded as capital or deadly. The same would be true if the cause of its rejection came from sins which found their origin in the carnal appetites. But all sin, whether mortal or venial, tends to separate the soul from God.

A close analogy is apparent between human friendship and the friendship of the soul with God. There may be offences committed between friends that are sufficient to destroy friendship entirely, while other offences strain and weaken it. In the same way there are sins that destroy, and others that weaken, the grace of God within the soul. The Apostle Paul, speaking of certain sins, says, "they who do such things cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (Galatians, chap. 5, verse 21). The distinction between mortal and venial sins is therefore good in logic, in harmony with experience, and commends itself to common sense. The first strike at the very founda-

tions of moral and spiritual life, utterly destroy grace and charity, and cause the death of the soul. The last, though they may dispose to, and by accumulation create mortal sin, do not, unless they reach it, destroy the friendship of the soul with God. Venial sin is a disease of the soul, but is not its death, since the grace of God remains by which it may be cured. Mortal sin is, on the contrary, irreparable, and those who are guilty of it have lost every principle of vitality, and are spiritually dead. No power of renewal can come from within, but the power of God is without limit, as is also His mercy, and He can, if He will, make the dead soul hear His voice and live. Final impenitence is an unpardonable sin.

On such a tremendous subject, however, Catholic scholars have always allowed that absolute decisions as to particular sins must often be difficult. Venial sins can be classed with deadly sins, differing from them however in being either lighter in their matter or lacking knowledge or deliberation in their doing. The acts of the will and the extent to which they have been influenced by deliberation, have to be taken into account, as well as the evil wrought by the sin itself. Where there is no deliberation, there is no act of the will, and where there is no act of the will, it is difficult to show there is sin. Man does not fall away from God by mischance, but only by an act of the will, and logically it would appear that any grave sin acted with deliberate intention must be classed as mortal. On the other hand, a sin of undoubted magnitude, like theft, may really

have very small moral results, while smaller sins by accumulation may destroy the soul, just as a sufficient number of pin pricks in the veins and arteries would cause the body to bleed to death. A sin therefore is deadly when it is of sufficient magnitude to have consequences far-reaching and large, and is the result of a deliberate act of the will. It is venial sin when its consequences are small; when it is not the result of intention, but of weakness, carelessness, or foolishness.

St. Augustine has little to say of the Seven Deadly Sins, but has much to say of mystical numbers, and especially of the number seven. He regards it as a sacred number, and the symbol of all time. In one of his New Testament sermons, he says: "Seven then is usually put for a whole, because in seven days the revolution of time is completed, and when the seventh day is ended, it returneth to the first again, that the same revolution may be continued. In such revolutions whole ages pass away, and yet there is no departure from the number seven. What then is 'seven times a day will I praise thee' but what is said in another place, 'His praise shall always be in my mouth?'"

In the "City of God," where he is discussing the creation of the world, he gives a much fuller development of his ideas in regard to mystical numbers, and says;—

"And these were performed in six days because of the perfection of the number six, one being six times repeated: not that God was tied to time, and could not have created all at once, and afterwards have

bound the motions to time's congruence, but because that number signified the perfection of the work: for six is the first number that is filled by conjunction of the parts, the sixth, the third, and the half: which is one, two and three; all which conjoined are six. Parts in numbers are those that may be described of how many they are, as a half, a third, a fourth, and so forth. But four being in nine, yet is no just part of it: one is the ninth part, and three the third part. But these two parts, one and three, are far from making nine the whole. So four is a part of ten, but no just part: one is the tenth part, two the fifth, and five the second, yet these three parts, one, two, and five, make not up full ten, but eight only. As for the number of twelve, the parts exceed it. For there is one the twelfth part, six the second, four the third, three the fourth, and two the sixth. But one, two, three, four, and six, make above twelve, namely sixteen. This by the way now to prove the perfection of the number six, the first (as I said), that is made of the conjunction of the parts: and in this did God make perfect all His works. Wherefore this number is not to be despised, but has the esteem apparently confirmed by many places of Scripture. Nor was it said in vain of God's works, 'Thou madest all things in number, weight and measure.' (Wisd. xi.)

"But on the seventh day, that is, the seventh repetition of the first day (which number has perfection also in another kind), God rested, and gave the first rule of sanctification therein. The day that had no even, God would not sanctify in His works but in rest.

For there is none of His works, but being considered first in God, and then in itself, will produce a day's knowledge, and an even's. Of the perfection of seven, I could say much, but this volume grows big, and I fear I shall be held rather to take occasion to show my small skill, than to respect others' edification. Therefore we must have a care of gravity and moderation, lest running all upon number, we be thought neglecters of weight and measure. Let this be sufficient admonition, that three is the first number, wholly odd, and four wholly even, and these two make seven, which is therefore oftentimes put for all; as here, 'The just shall fall seven times a day, and rise again,' that is, 'How oftsoever he fall, he shall rise again.' (Prov. xxiv. 16.) (This is not meant of iniquity, but of tribulation, drawing him to humility.) Again, 'Seven times a day will I praise thee;' the same he had said before: 'His praise shall be always in my mouth.' Many such places as these the Scripture has, to prove the number of seven to be often used for "all," "universally." Therefore is the Holy Spirit called oftentimes by this number, of whom Christ said, 'He shall teach us all truth.' There is God's rest, wherein we rest in God: in this whole, in this perfection is rest, in the part of it was labour: therefore we labour, because we know as yet but in part, but when perfection is come, that which is in part shall be abolished. This makes us search the Scriptures so laboriously. But the holy angels (unto whose glorious congregation our toilsome pilgrimage casts a long look), as they have eternal permanence, so have

SUPERBIA



*Excorata Deis, hominique, Superbia nulli
Heu placeo, placeo dum nimis ipsa mibi.
Namque Nabuchodonosor per me, ceciditque tyrannus
Iherusalem. Herodes, nimis autem domum plackeret feci. Credat postea.*

PRIDE.

(After De Vos.)

they easy knowledge, and happy rest in God, helping us without trouble, because their spiritual, pure, and free motions are without labour."

The Seven Deadly Sins have their opposites in the Seven chief Virtues, which are Humility, Chastity, Love, Patience, Bounty, Temperance, and Vigilance. It is a conjecture of Prof. Henry Sidgwick's, more ingenious than convincing, that the chief virtues were the result of a combination made by St. Augustine of the four pagan virtues enumerated by Plato—Prudence, Temperance, Justice, and Courage—with the Christian graces of Faith, Hope, and Charity, and that this determined the ground plan of systematic ethics for subsequent ecclesiastical writers generally. In antithesis to the list of virtues an enumeration of the chief deadly sins obtained currency. They were at first reckoned as eight, but a preference for mystical numbers "characteristic of medieval theologians" reduced them to seven.

The ingenuity and plausibility of the theory make its accuracy doubtful, especially when there is little evidence either in the writings of Augustine or out of them to support it. Sidgwick urges also that, inasmuch as the sins are variously stated in the early theological writers, and include, Envy, Vain-Glory, Gloominess, and Languid Indifference, a study of the list as a whole "shows them to represent the moral experience of the monastic life." Very probably they did, but we must go deeper than that statement will take us. They represented the moral experience of monastic life, because monasteries were peopled with human beings, the majority of whom were not saints, though some

of them no doubt honestly tried to be. But the sins stood just as well for the moral experience of the world outside.

Present-day writers on occult subjects, on the other hand, who attach significance and value to mystical numbers, claim that the sins came into the Church when Christianity was in touch with a more ancient faith, and find their origin in the religion of ancient Egypt, a religion in which magic and mystical numbers played no inconsiderable part.

The Dean of Christ Church (Bampton Lectures, 1895), points out "how very powerful the influence of the mystical method of interpretation was upon the systematisation of moral ideas. A similar account may be given of the origin of the classification of deadly sins. It seems to have been developed by the monks of the Egyptian desert on the basis of this method of exegesis. Origen regards the nations whom the children of Israel were to overcome in Palestine as types of the sins which occupy the souls of man . . . The earliest method of the classification in the form which it finally assumed is in the East, and it comes from the Egyptian desert." Other writers to whom he refers as doing their part in the final classification of the sins, are also Egyptians, or dwellers in Egypt, so that the balance of evidence from all sources seems to point to Egypt, with its religion of mystery, as the place whence the influence of mystical methods of interpreting came. Why that influence succeeded in so powerfully shaping the imagination of the Christian world for something over ten centuries, is a question that still awaits an answer.

CHAPTER II.

The Sins and Religious Drama.

TO the writers of religious plays the sins were replete with dramatic possibilities, of which, however, they did not avail themselves to any great extent. It is difficult to say with certainty when these plays were first performed in England, but Matthew Paris mentions the performance of a miracle play on the life of St. Catherine in the year 1100, and it was in the thirteenth century, when they were first written in the language of the common people, that their great influence began. Standing as they often did in the place of the sermon, and aiming as they always did to teach, by dramatic representation, the doctrines of the Catholic faith, they are an intensely interesting and valuable branch of our ancient literature. But there is no genius, though there is occasionally fine imagination, among them, and both sins and virtues when we meet them in religious drama tend to become conventional and commonplace. As impersonations the sins are more striking than the virtues, but then they were always much closer to the facts of life, and were never in any danger of becoming mere abstractions, as the virtues often were. They naturally made excellent dramatic contrasts to the virtues, and found their place when

comedy was required and evil was a cause of mirth, as well as when the play concerned itself with deeper themes, such as Temperance, Righteousness, and Judgment to come. But on the whole the writers of these plays were preachers with a didactic or a religious purpose rather than dramatic artists, and more was done with the sins by preaching about them, than by letting them in their naked hideousness preach for themselves.

In the Chester Plays (1477), there is good sermonising on three deadly sins; not however the three referred to by St. Augustine. The following introductory passages (dated 1628), on the cover of MS. Harl., 2124, record facts concerning their authorship:—

The Whitsun Plays were first made by Don Randle Heggenet, Monk of Chester Abbey, who was thrice at Rome, before he could obtain leave of the Pope to have them in the English tongue.

The Whitsun Plays were played openly in pageants, by the citizens of Chester in Whitsun week.

Nicholas the Fifth then was Pope, in the year of our Lord, 1477.

Sir Henry Ffrancis, sometime a monk of the Monastery of Chester, obtained of Pope Clemens a thousand days of pardon for every person that resorted peaceably to see the same plays, and that every person that disturbed the same, to be accursed by the same Pope until such time as they be absolved thereof.

On the first leaf of another MS., Harl. 2013, it is said:—

The proclamation for Whitsun Plays, made by William Newall, clerk: William Snead, second year mayor. For as much as in old time, not only for the augmentation and increase of the Holy and Catholic Faith of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and to exhort the minds of common people to good devotion and wholesome doctrine thereof; but

also for the commonwealth and prosperity of this city, a play, and declaration of divers stories of the Bible, beginning with the Creation, and fall of Lucifer, and ending with the general judgment of the world, to be declared and played in the Whitsun week, was devised and made by our Sir Henry Francis, sometime monk of this monastery dissolved. Who obtained and got of Clement, Bishop of Rome, 1000 days of pardon granted from thenceforth to every person resorting in peaceable manner, with good devotion to hear and see the said plays from time to time as oft as they shall be played in the said city. And that every person, or persons, disturbing the said plays, may in any wise be accused by the authority of the said Pope Clement's bulls until such times as he, or they, be absolved thereof, which plays were devised to the honour of God, by John Arnway, then Mayor of this City of Chester, and his brethren and the whole commonality thereof, to be brought forth, declared and played at the cost and charges of the craftsmen and occupations of the said city, which hither unto, from time to time, used and performed the same accordingly.

The Chester Plays are excellent specimens of popular religious drama, and its position, and influence are both concisely expressed in these introductory remarks on the two manuscripts. Sir John Arnway was Mayor of Chester in 1327 and 1328, and this period may be taken as the approximate date of the plays. There is a rhymed instruction to the various trades as to the particular episode of the story which they have to set forth: often delightfully simple, and full of humour and fine religious feeling. The tanners, who "of custom old the fall of Lucifer did set out," are exhorted to a careful rendering of the text, and a proper dressing of the characters, and to let their show be—

Good speech, fine players, with apparel comely.

To the drapers is given the "Creation of the World," and they are bidden "according to your wealth, set it

out wealthily ;" to the "good simple water leaders and drawers of Dee" is committed the pageant of the Flood ; the "Wax Chandlers of ancient time" have the story of Abraham ; and the cappers and linen drapers, "that worthy story of Balaam and his ass, and of Balak the King," and are exhorted to—

Make the ass speak, and set it out lively.

The "wrights and slaters, with good players in shew," have the "Birth of Christ" to present, and are to "bring forth your well-decked carriage" ; and the painters and glasiers, who have to present the "Angels' Annunciation of the Nativity," have, perhaps, the most charming verse in the whole of the "Banes" :—

The appearing angel, and star on Christ's birth
To shepherds poor, of base and low degree,
You painters and glasiers, deck out with all mirth,
And see that "Gloria in Excelsis" be sung merrily.
Few words in that pageant make mirth truly,
For all the author had to stand upon,
Was "Glory to God on High," and "Peace on Earth to Man."

The plays were performed by the various companies in various parts of the city, by the aid of pageant wagons and on a movable stage, with (there can be no doubt) a double, and occasionally a triple division in them to represent Heaven, the World, and Hell. In the play of the "Temptation," performed by the Guild of the Butchers, we find the sermon on the three sins. Satan, "the devil in his feathers, all ragged and rent," enters and soliloquises about the mystery which surrounds the person of Christ, and resolves to overcome Him, and to make Him subject to himself :—

What great and master man is this
 Who in the world hath come?
 His mother I wot did never amiss,
 And that now marvailes me.

He is a man from foot to crown,
 Gotten without corruption ;
 Nor knew I ever one before
 So clean of conversation.

Among the sinful sin doth He none,
 And purer He than any one ;
 He seems to be of blood and bone,
 And wiser than ever man was.
 Avarice none nor Envy
 In Him could I espy ;
 He hath no gold in treasury,
 Nor tempted is by sight.
 Pride hath He none nor Gluttony,
 Nor liking He of Lechery :
 His mouth I never heard to lie,
 Neither by day nor night.
 My Highness aye He putteth behind
 For in Him fault I none can find ;
 If He be God in mannes kind,
 My craft then fully fails.

It does fail. The episode of the temptation is simply and beautifully given in a lengthy, but forcible and dramatic scene ; Satan is duly routed as in the New Testament story, and then enters the "Expositor." He resembles the chorus of the classical plays, explains the points of the story to those who may have missed them, and preaches his sermon on the three sins which proved deadly to Adam, but which Christ repelled.

Expositor.

Lo ! lordlings, God's righteousness,
 St. Gregory so makes mind express,
 Since Adam overcome he was
 By three things to do evil.
 Gluttony and Vain-Glory are two,
 Covetousness, yea that also
 By these three things withouten moe,
 Christ overcame the Devil.

Adam was tempted to Gluttony
 When of the fruit falsely
 The Devil made him to eat.
 And tempted he was to Vain-Glory
 When sought he him great mastery
 To have godhead unworthily
 Through eating of that meat.

He tempted was to Avarice,
 When he het him to be wise,
 Know good and ill at his devise
 More than he was worthy.
 For Covetousness, Gregory saith, express
 Sins not only with riches
 But in desiring haughtiness
 And highest place unlawfully
 And state unskilfully.

Also Christ in these sins three
 Was tempted as you well might see,
 For in Gluttony, believe you me,
 He moved Him as you saw here
 When he enticed Him through His rede
 To turn the stones into bread
 And so to prove His Godhead,
 Of which He was in fear.

In Vayne-Glory he tempted also,
 When he excited Him down to go
 The pinnacle of the Temple froe,
 An unskilful gate.

And in Covetousness He tempted was,
 When he shewed Him such riches
 And het Him lands, both more and less,
 And there through great estate.

But Adam fell through his trespass,
 But Christ withstood him through His grace,
 For of His Godhead Sathanas
 That time was clean deceived.

In the "Conversion of St. Paul," a play from the Digby Mysteries, there is a sermon (Dr. Furnivall says a dull one) on the Seven Deadly Sins. The Digby Mysteries were edited by him for the Early English Text Society, and he puts 1540 as their probable date. The preacher is the Apostle Paul, who is called Saulus, and his sermon brings the play to its conclusion.

The Lord that is shaper of sea and land
 And hath wrought with His word all things at His will,
 Save this assembly that here sits or stands,
 For His meek mercy that we do not fail.
 Grant me, good Lord, Thy pleasure to fulfil
 And send me such speech that I the truth say,
 My intentions profitable to move, if I may.

Well-beloved friends, there be Seven Mortal Sins
 Which are proved principal and princes of poisons ;
 Pride, that of bitterness all bale begins,
 Witholding all faith it feedeth and foysonnes,
 As Holy Scripture beareth plain witness,
Initium omnium peccatorum superbia est,
 That often destroyeth both most and least.

Of all vices and folly Pride is the root ;
 Humility may not reign nor yet endure :
 Pity alack ! that is flower and helper
 Is exiled where Pride hath succour.

Good Lord give us grace to understand and persever,
Omnis qui se exaltat humiliabitur,
 Thy word, as Thou bidst to fulfil ever.

But dread alway Sin and Folly,
 Wrath, Envy, Covetousness, and Sluggishness ;
 Exit out of thy sight Gluttony and Lechery,
 Vanity and Vain-Glory, and false Idleness :
 These be the branches of all wickedness :
 Who that in him these vices root
 He lacketh all grace, and bale is his boot.
 Learn of Myself for I am meek in heart,
 Our Lord to His servants thus He saith,
 For meekness I suffered a spear in My heart ;
 Meekness all vices annuleth and delayeth ;
 Rest to souls shall find Him in faith :
Discite a me, quia mitis sum, et corde humiliis,
Et invenietis requiem animabus vestris.

So our Saviour sheweth example of meekness,
 Through grace of His goodness meekly He stands ;
 Truly it will save us from the sins sickness,
 For Pride and his progeny meekness confounds ;
Quanto maior es, tanto humilia te in omnibus ;
 The greater thou art the lower look thou be,
 Bear thee never the higher for thy degree.

In the “Castle of Perseverance” (A.D. 1425), the Sins appear not only as tempters but as warriors too, though it must be confessed they are, in this latter capacity, of a feeble type. “The Castle of Perseverance” has been long known as an exceedingly fine specimen of the old morality play, but it remained in manuscript till 1904, when it was published by the Early English Text Society, and edited by Dr. F. J. Furnivall and Mr. A. W. Pollard. It is a play of

LUXURIA



Omnia peruerbit Veneris vespere Libido,
 Iura, fidem, patriam, sequ, suosque Deos.
 Sic Moab natus Israhel querit. et Ammon
 Germanus impatiens ardet amore fuit
 natus. Cyprius le Passe
 Sculptor excudit Coloniae.

LECHERY.

(After De l'os.)

The good angel coveteth evermore man's salvation,
The bad beseteth him evermore to his damnation,
And God hath given man free arbitration,
Whether he will himself save, or his soul peril.

Mankind is young ; the World, the Flesh, and the Devil beset him with their snares, and chief among the Devil's henchmen are the Seven Deadly Sins. There is no attempt at characterisation ; they are names and nothing more, but Mankind chooses to follow the World and the Sins, and the moral of his so doing is driven home vigorously even by the votaries of the three lower powers ; Pleasure saying—

Whoso will with folly ruled be,
He is worthy to be servant here,
That draweth to sins seven.
Whoso will be false and covetous,
With this world he shall have land and house ;
This world's wisdom careth not a louse
For God or for high Heaven."

He remains bound to the pleasures of his lower nature till he reaches "forty wynters old," and then a desire for amendment comes. The World has given him of its treasures to the full, the Sins Seven have ministered to his fleshly pleasures and vices, but there is no satisfaction in his soul.

We have eaten garlic everyone,
And if I should to Hell now go,
I wot I shall not go alone.

Relief comes to him through contrition and penance, and by their advice he resolves to amend his past errors, and, forsaking the Seven Sins for the Seven Virtues, he enters the "Castle of Perseverance" to

the joy of his Good Angel, and to the wrath of the Angel of Ill.

His penitence is not a shallow thing; it is meant to be whole-hearted and real, but it is not lasting.

Out upon thee, deadly sin;
Sin thou hast mankind destroyed;
In deadly sin my life is spent;
Mercy! God omnipotent.

The entrenchment of Mankind in the “Castle of Perseverance,” and the endeavour of the Seven Sins under the direction of the Bad Angel to dislodge him therefrom, must have led to some stage effects that were highly realistic according to the dramatic standards which then existed.

If thou wilt to Heaven win
And keep from thee worldly distance,
Go to yon castle and keep therein
For it is stronger than any in France.

The pageant wagon with its three divisions for Heaven, Earth, and Hell was sometimes unequal to the task imposed on it, and the open ground with perhaps the kind of simple scenic accessories that may occasionally be seen in the booths of an old-fashioned country fair helped out the imagination of the audience. There is in the MS. of the play a rude sketch or plan which appears to indicate the spectacular form which the performance took. A circular ditch is depicted of which it is said, “This is the water about the place, if any ditch may be made there, it shall be played or else that it be strongly barred all about, and let nothing over many stiles be within.” At the four points of

the compass are the “skaffles” on which appear God, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; God and the World standing east and west, and the Devil and the Flesh north and south. North-east, lying between Deus and Belial, is a scaffold for Covetousness, who has an important and final part to play when the battle between the Sins and the Virtues is over. In the centre of the circle is the “Castle of Perseverance,” in which Mankind entrenches himself with the Virtues, now that his repentance has led him from his evil ways; and beneath the castle is the bed of Mankind on which, presumably, his life begins and ends.

Within the castle Mankind is safe, the Sins cannot harm him except he gives them power to do so, and Humility bursts forth into song at his deliverance from the evil powers,

Now blessed be our lady, of Heaven Empress.
 Now doth Mankind from folly fall,
 And is in the castle of Goodness ;
 He haunteth now Heaven's hall.

In response to her song of joy comes the defiance of the Bad Angel, who in no way fears the Virtues, or anything they can do, but is certain of ultimate victory.

Nay ! by Belial's bright bones,
 There shall he in no wise dwell,
 He shall be won from holy ways,
 To the World the Flesh and the Devil of Hell.

• • • •
 The Seven Sins, the kings three
 To Mankind hath enmity ;
 Sharply shall they now help me,
 This castle for to break.

Ho ! Flibbertigibbet ! Backbiter !
Our message look you make.
Blithe about you look you bear !
See Mankind his sins doth forsake.

Ho ! Flibbertigibbet run and haste,
Bid the World, the Fiend, the Flesh,
That they come to fighting fresh,
To win again Mankind.

It is clear he has all the qualities of leader, and the Seven Deadly Sins rally to his standard at once. But they are poor creatures in themselves, and the Bad Angel has good reason to complain of the quality of his army. Backbiter is, however, an excellent lieutenant, and calls upon the Flesh and the World to recapture Mankind. The battle between the Sins and the Virtues is a fine dramatic episode. It is preceded by a tirade of abuse hurled by the Sins against their amiable and highly respectable opponents. The abuse is medieval Billingsgate, and differs in no way in essentials from Billingsgate of the present day. Even the terms are often identical, and a very little alteration indeed would make the dialogue resemble a slanging match between a band of irate women in the slums of White-chapel to-day. There are, however, poetic touches in the incident. The Sins hurl filth, but the Virtues respond with roses, and the fragrant missiles when they fall on the Bad Angel and his deadly army, beat them black and blue, and they retire discomfited from the field.

It is only for a time. One Sin still nestles in the heart of Mankind, and eventually draws him from his

stronghold. Time has cooled the heats of youth and passion, and the Sins which haunt life's beginning have less power with later years, and no farther attacks are openly made upon the castle. But there still remains Covetousness. It was an old belief that this sin was an ordinary vice of age, and Byron shared it when he wrote:—

So for a good old-gentlemanly vice
I think I must take up with avarice.

As age creeps nearer, Mankind—who has now no longer grace to stay within the walls of the castle—holds parley with Covetousness:

Covetousness, whither should I wend ?
What way wouldest thou I should hold ?
To what place wouldest thou me send ?
I begin to wax hoary and cold :
My back beginneth to bow and bend :
I crawl and creep and wax all cold.

Mankind returns to the world, and the Sins finally win their battle. The Virtues do their best to persuade, but, except for a quaint touch here and there, it must be confessed that their arguments are tedious. Abstinence tells him

This world is like a three-legged stool,
It fails a man at his greatest need.

Industry urges that wealth is nothing when death draws nigh, and wonders at his resolve to leave the castle—

Mankind, of one thing have I wonder,
Thou takest not in time to mend ;
When body and soul are parted in sunder
No worldly good shall with thee wend,
When thou art dead and in the earth lie under.

Generosity has her exhortation also, and pleads against Covetousness, but without effect ;—

Mankind saith he hath never enowe,
Till his mouth be full of clay.
When he is closed in grasp of death,
What help in riches or great array ?
It flyeth away like any snow,
Anon after thy ending day.

The dialogue ends with a scornful and unclean outburst on the part of the Bad Angel. He is victor and knows it, and he spits out foulness at the Virtues, and bears off Mankind captive once more.

Ba ! go forth and let the queans cackle.
Where women are, are many words :
Let them go hopping with their hackle !

He rhymes, but his rhyme is unprintable, and the play is full of a sad pathetic irony until the end is reached. Death comes, and Mankind realises the truth of what the Virtues have said. All his worldly goods are taken from him and given to a youth, whose name is "I know not who." The World, the Flesh, and the Bad Angel laugh at him with bitter mirth, and he sinks lifeless on the bed beneath the castle.

With the modern dramatist death must end all, but it did not with the writers of the religious plays. The soul of man comes forth from the body and asks mercy. The Bad Angel claims the soul and says it must go with him to Hell, and the Good Angel disputes his claim. Then begins a long discussion between Mercy, Righteousness, Truth, and Justice. It is a discussion of the schoolmen brought down to the level of a popular audience, and excellently well it is done.

Mercy hears the cry of the soul, and pleads for it for Christ's sake.

When the Jews proffered Christ esyl and gall on the Good Friday,
God granted that remission,
Mercy and Absolution,
Through virtue of His passion,
To no man should be said "nay."

Justice argues against Mercy with much skill and with strict logic. She admits the force of her sister's argument, but the evidence of evil-doing is beyond dispute, a death-bed repentance is a worthless thing, and offers no guarantee of a good life, and Mankind has not sought Mercy in life.

Sister, ye saith with good skill
That Mercy passeth man's misdeeds,
But take Mercy whoso will,
He must ask with love and dread ;
And every man that will fulfil
The deadly sins and follow misdeeds,
Then let him lie in Hell and stink,

As he hath brewed let him drink,
The Devil shall quit him his meed.

Truth and Justice demand Mankind's damnation, but Mercy and Pity plead for his forgiveness. It could not have been God's ordinance, they argue, that Mankind should suffer for ever. Some factor is in the problem which is not of God. God hears the argument, and, much after the manner of a modern judge, takes time to consider. It is not His wish, He says, to condemn Mankind to perpetual torment, and if He can find cause for mercy He will. He does. The Sins are the false element not of His creation, but His

forgiveness will destroy them. Quaintly and in child-like fashion He bids His daughters four, Peace, Justice, Truth, and Mercy, "take Mankind,"—

Bring him to Me
And set here by My knee,
In heaven to be,
In bliss with games and glee.

Then comes the turn of the Bad Angel. All through the play he has been victorious, but he is beaten now, commanded to release Mankind, and Justice orders him—

Go thou to Hell
Thou devil as bold as a bell,
Therein to dwell,
In brass and brimstone to boil.

God then delivers a final homily in New Testament language, saying that—

The good on the right side shall stand full sure,
The bad on the left side there shall I set.
The seven deeds of mercy whoso hath done,
To the hungry to give meat,
Or drink to the thirsty, or to the naked vesture,
The poor or the pilgrim home to take,
Or thy neighbour that hath need
· · · · ·
Heaven's bliss shall be his meed.

And the play ends with the lines—

Thus endeth our games.
To save you from sinning,
Ever at the beginning
Think on your last ending.
Te Deum, Laudamus!"

In dramatic construction crude, and in characterisation weak, dealing frankly with facts of life which are

veiled on the modern stage, the “ Castle of Perseverance ” is nevertheless an intensely human play, and has those qualities, indefinable, but real and permanent, which grip and hold the imagination. In the broad and sweeping survey of life which the authors of such plays took, nothing that happened to men and women was too small to be ignored. An honest effort was made to see the facts of life in their true perspective, and in their actual relations to each other, and Nature to these men had nothing that was common or unclean. The mimic warfare on the stage between the Sins and Virtues typified the eternal warfare which goes on in the heart of man, between base ideals and noble, between good and evil, the senses and the soul.

CHAPTER III.

The Sins and Social Revolt.

HERE seems to have been a perfect passion for allegory in fourteenth century literature, and to this the Sins lent themselves readily enough ; it was their natural environment, their proper place. The rising of the peasants, under the leadership of Wat Tyler in 1381, and the social wrongs and unrest of which these movements were symptoms, had to find, and did find literary expression. It is in this ferment, and the intellectual activity that followed after it, that the Seven Deadly Sins gradually occupy an important place in English literature.

William Langland (1332-1400), John Gower (1325-1408), and Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400), found in them fruitful material for character painting and for sermonising too, and Langland gives us the first really dramatic and artistic presentation of them. The rugged democrat who wrote the "Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman" is a kind of medieval counterpart of Thomas Carlyle, and is certainly as stern a preacher of social righteousness as he. Surveying his "field full of folk" he does not fail to see the mischief wrought therein by the Vices of Pride, Envy, Sloth, and the rest ; so he brings them together to

listen to the preaching of Reason, or Conscience,* and they are powerfully affected thereby and seek to be shriven.

It is not, however, the influence of Reason and Conscience upon wicked lives that is the most interesting part of this episode, though that in itself as a piece of psychological analysis is fine, it is the vivid and terrible pictures of the Sins themselves. They are human incarnations of the moral diseases they represent, and they live and weep and pray and curse before our eyes.

Personelle, proud heart, cast her to the earth,
And lay long ere she looked, and lorde Mercy cried,
And besought Him that us all made,
She should unsowe her shirt, and set therein an haire
To tame her flesh that so fierce was to sin.

A faithful son of the Church, Langland, never intentionally attacks any of her fundamental doctrines. He preaches confession and penitence to the Sins, but his path to social reform was by way of personal righteousness, and the Catholic Church, as he knew it, did not make for that. His poem is a great passionate cry of protest against corruption in Church and State. He sees in his vision—

All the wealth of the world and its woe, both, and proclaims that it is the ill use made of wealth that causes woe. With the people, and of them, seeing their sufferings, the tyranny of the nobles, and the hypocrisy of the priests, he spoke burning, withering words that went farther than he knew. He saw the

*In the A text it is the former, in the B text the latter.

Deadly Sins everywhere, but poured scorn on the Pope's remedies of indulgencies and pardons, and put right living before outward forms and sacraments. He taught that wealth, if mis-used, might be taken from its unworthy possessor by the king, and used by him for the people's good. That the monarch, having taken it, might possibly use it for his own good instead of the people's never seems to have occurred to him. The passion of the preacher, and the fire of the prophet were in his words, but the fruits they bore in after times had Dead Sea apples amid their ripeness, and sours and bitters mingle with their sweets.

The entrance of Luxuria gives opportunity for Langland to denounce a popular English vice which has stood a good deal of denouncing. He bids the people who work to dine but once and to drink with the duck, in other words to drink water, especially on Saturday, for to be drunken on Saturday night is to be unfit for the duties of the following day.

The description of Avarice is the most powerful piece of character painting in the poem—

Then came Coveytise, whom I cannot describe,
So hungry and hollow-eyed he looked.
He was beetle-browed, and baber lipped
With his bleared eyes like a blind hag,
And as a leathern purse lolled his cheeks
Wider than his chin, and with age he trembled,
And as a bondman of his bacon his beard was bedrivelled.
With a hood on his head, and a dirty hat above,
And in a tawny tabard coat of twelve winters' age,
All torn and dirty and full of lice creeping.

Not less hideous is the description of Sloth—

Then came Slothe all beslabred with the slymy eyes ;
 "I must sit," quoth this man, "or else I should sleep,
 I may not stand nor stoop nor without a stool kneel."
 "What ! awake man !" cried Repentance, "and haste thee to shrifte."
 "If I should die this day I list not to look.
 I know not my paternoster as the priest he it singeth ;
 I can rhyme of Robin Hood, and Randolph Earl of Chester ;
 But our Lord or our Lady, not the least that ever was made.
 I have made vows forty and forgot them in the morn :
 I have performed no penance as the priest me told :
 Right sorry for my sins yet was I never :
 If I tell any beads it is but in wrath,
 And what I tell with my tongue is two miles from my heart."*

It is John Gower's misfortune that his poetry is the most tedious in the English language. His moral aims were of the highest order ; there is often a deep and earnest sincerity in his words, and he rendered a service to English literature which has been permanent, inasmuch as he was the first writer of stories in the English tongue, and the first creator of these "moral tales" which have since become so dear to English domestic circles. Devout, cultured, and of upright life, kind-hearted and wealthy, and with a strong natural bias in favour of the established order of things, John Gower represented, alike in his books and his life, all that was solid and all that was slow-going in the English character. He sympathises with the oppressed peasantry to a very limited extent, and only because the goodness of his nature leads him to sympathise with suffering everywhere. He is on the side of the respectabilities, never strays from the beaten

*Compare Bunyan's town "two miles off from honesty" and the passage in his sermons, "Give me a ballad or a newsbook, George on horseback, or Sir Bevis of Southampton."



*Invidia atra fues, succubibus aspera fangis
 Ipsa ego sum infelix carnicina mei.
 Liuor enim fratrum iusti non vendebat Ioseph:
 Occidit Herodis prodomus inuidia. Nec de via iacent.
Origen de Profe. f. et ecce.*

ENVY.

(After De Vos.)

path, but ambles along it in steady and decorous fashion, discoursing conventional morality the while with some eloquence and at everlasting length. The Seven Virtues and the Seven Sins were at the foundations of all medieval moral teaching, and in two of his books we find much discourse, edifying or otherwise, upon them.

He wrote three books in French, Latin, and English respectively, and they are entitled “*Speculum Meditantis*,” “*Vox Clamantis*,” and “*Confessio Amantis*.” It is in the first and the last that he discourses on the Sins, and in the last we find this conservative country gentleman honestly facing the problem of a social revolution. The peasant's revolt under Wat Tyler and Jack Straw spread over the greater part of the Eastern Counties and being a landed proprietor in those counties, he was in close touch with it. Oppressed beyond endurance, and ground down by a shamelessly unjust taxation, the peasantry rose in insurrection. Straw was an ill-balanced and wild-headed man, but Tyler seems to have had some of the qualities of a leader, though, like his followers, no clear view of what was needed in reform. If there had been statesmanship in England in 1381, the rising of the peasants might have brought about a better state of society, but there was none. The young king was profligate and treacherous, and his advisers self-seeking, and a short reign of mob-law was followed by a wholesale slaughter of the revolters, and the murder of Wat Tyler.

Gower sought for the causes of the revolt, and found them, as Langland did, in the selfishness of the wealthy

classes and the corruption of the Church. Writing in Latin, and for the educated classes, his remedy is to recall them to the ancient ideals of the Christian faith from which they had fallen away. He does not spare them in his poem, but he does not fail to point out the shortcomings of the peasants, though none of them could read his words. What he says about them probably had its modicum of truth, but it is pretty much what the well-to-do always say of the working classes when the latter assert their rights. That his words did not miss their mark is shown by the fact that he won a more than English, a European reputation, and was the first English writer whose books were translated into a foreign tongue. On the manuscript of one of them is a drawing showing him shooting his arrow against the world.

It was not until 1895, that we could say we possessed Gower's works in their entirety. The "Speculum Meditantis" was lost for some two or three centuries, and Prof. Henry Morley, writing in 1888, said: "Of Gower's French poem "Speculom Meditantis" no copy can now be found. Some day perhaps a manuscript of it will be discovered abroad in some quiet old monastic library." The manuscript of it was discovered in 1894, but not in a monastery. It was found by the distinguished scholar, Mr. G. C. Macaulay, in the library of Cambridge University. It had been purchased in 1891, at a sale of old manuscripts belonging to Edward Hailstone, deceased, and given to the library of his University. Mr. Macaulay had occasion to examine it in 1894, and to his intense

delight was able to identify it as the lost Gower manuscript. He has now edited it with the rest of Gower's works, and the complete edition of Gower was published by the Clarendon Press in 1898.

It has always been assumed that the phrase of Chaucer "Moral Gower" had a touch of kindly irony in it, and this may be the fact. But it is at least possible it was kindly commendation from the great artist to the clever and high-minded friend whom he certainly respected and admired. "Give me that there shall be less vice and more virtue for my speaking" expresses Gower's aim accurately enough, and from an ethical standpoint there could scarcely be a higher one. And prosy and commonplace though he be, the patriot as well as the poet may be seen in his verse. Dr. Samuel Johnson describes him "as the first of our authors who can properly be said to have written English," and there is no reason for demurring to this statement. When he was asked by the young king, Richard II, to write him a new book, Gower was an at an age when a man might be excused for laying down his pen. But the old man's thoughts turned to the speech of his own people, in whose language he had never written yet, and in this his final work he resolves to put aside the learned languages and write in his native tongue. For the young king's sake he writes wisely, and out of his life's experience, of the value and happiness of upright living, as he had known them, and out of the lore of legend and of history he writes of the evil wrought by the Seven Deadly Sins. And with all his prosing they

lose nothing of their deadliness in his hands. But Richard II. failed him as he failed all good men, and the “Confessio Amantis” became a book written for his country’s sake. He determines that he will not in his closing years be too wise or too learned, “for sooth it is”

That who that al of wisdom writ
 It dulleth oft a mannés wit
 To him that shall it all day rede,
 For thilké cause, if that ye rede,
 I woldé go the middle way,
 And write a booke between the twey ;
 Somewhat of lust, somewhat of lore,
 That of the lassé or the more
 Some man may like of that I write :
 And for that fewé men endite,
 In our Englisshe, I thinké make
 A booké for Englondés sake.

Fancy and imagination are not unlikely to flag when a poet is within measurable distance of his seventieth year, and John Gower was probably 67 when he began the “Confessio Amantis.” But now and again there are pleasant passages, which show that the poet’s delight in nature and natural scenery had not forsaken him with his youth. He is telling the story of Actaeon and Diana, and thus describes the most important episode therein—

So him befelle upon a tide
 On his hunting he gan ride,
 In a foreste along he was ;
 He sigh upon the grené gras
 The fairé freshé floures spring ;
 He herd among the levés singe
 The throstle and the nightingale.
 Thus ere he wist, into a dale

He came, wher was a litel plaine
 Al round aboute wel beseine
 With bushes grene and cedres high,
 And there within he cast his eye.
 Amid the plaine he saw a welle
 So fairé there might no man telle,
 In which Diana naked stoode
 To bathe and play her in the flood.

He has no power of character-drawing, he is only a story-teller, with a complete mastery of the art of narrative; but the following couplet from his description of a hypocrite would fit very well on to the descriptions of oily and smooth-spoken frauds, so numerous in our modern poetry and fiction.

And ever his chere is sobre and softe,
 And where he goeth he blesseth oft.

In Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales" the Seven Deadly Sins form the subject of the Parson's story, or sermon, the man who is thus described:—

A good man their was of religion,
 That was a poore Parson of a town,
 But rich he was of holy thought and work;
 He was also a learned man, a Clerk
 That Christés gospel truly would preach;
 His parishens devoutly would he teach;
 Benign he was, and wonder diligent,
 And in adversity full patient,
 And such he was yprovéd often sithés;
 Full loth were him to cursen for his tithés;
 But rather would he given out of doubt
 Unto his pooré parishens about
 Of his offering, and eke of his substance;
 He could in little thing have suffisance.
 Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder,
 But he ne left nought for no rain nor thunder,

In sickness and in mischief to visit
The farthest in his parish much and lite
Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff:
This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf;
That first he wrought, and afterwards he taught.
Out of the gospel he the wordés caught,
And of this figure, he added yet thereto
That if gold rusté what should iron do?
For if a priest be foul on whom we trust,
No wonder is a lewéd man to rust;
And shame it is that if a priest take keep
To see a “fouléd” shepherd and clean sheep:
Well ought a priest ensample for to give
By his cleanness how that his sheep should live.
He setté not his benefice to hire,
And let his sheep accumbred in the mire,
And ran unto Londón unto St. Poule’s
To seeken him a chantry for souls,
Or with a brotherhood to be withhold;
But dwelt at home and kepté well his fold,
So that the wolf made it not miscarry:
He was a shepherd and no mercenary:
And though he holy were and virtuous,
He was to sinful men not dispitious,
Ne of his speeché dangerous ne digne;
But in his teaching discreet and benign.
To drawen folk to heaven with fairnesse,
By good example, was his business;
But were it any person obstinate,
What so he were of high or low estate,
Him would he snibben sharply for the nones;
A better priest I trow there no where none is.
He waited after no pomp or reverence
Ne maked him no spicéd conscience:
But Christé’s lore and his apostles twelve
He taught, but first he followed it himselfe.

It is this man, type and picture of a faithful priest
for all time, content to do his duty with quiet manli-

ness and find his happiness in learning and virtue, whom Chaucer sets to deal with the seven evil influences which debase mankind. Readers of the "Canterbury Tales" often miss the long prose tractate at the end of the Pilgrimage, thereby losing something of Chaucer's perfect literary art. The pilgrims are finishing their journey, and it has been full of pleasure and of life. But there have been ribald stories told on the way, and if it were like other pilgrimages there may have been some drinking too, and in any case the attitude of the pilgrims' mind could hardly have been that of people who were serious, and ready to pray at the shrine of a saint. And so, as the afternoon shadows lengthen, and even-tide and the ancient city draw near, the parson is asked to contribute a story, and he gives them a sermon on Sin and Repentance. It is unmercifully long, and might almost be regarded as penance as well as exhortation, but it doubtless served its purpose, which was to bring back their wandering minds to the object of their quest.

Actually the sermon is not by Chaucer, but taken by him from a then famous treatise, written in the year 1279 for the use of Philip the Second of France, by a French friar, Frère Lourens or Laurence, and entitled *Le Somme des Vices et des Vertues*. It is a treatise dealing in a picturesque manner with the duties and dangers of the Christian life, and a large section of it is devoted to a consideration of the Seven Deadly Sins. It is this part of the treatise which Chaucer has borrowed. The Friar, for the purposes of his treatise, finds the origin of the Sins in the vision

of St. John as described in the Book of Revelation. The mystical number seven is greatly in evidence in the Apocalypse, and in the seven heads of the beast of hell Friar Lourens beholds the Seven Deadly Sins. He follows the metaphor closely, and, in the Ten Horns, and Ten Crowns, and Ten Kingdoms, finds many analogies on which to hang his homilies. The book was translated into the Kentish dialect in the year 1340 by Dan Michel of Northgate, by the title of the "Ayenbite of Inwyt," or "Remorse of Conscience." It is quite probable that Chaucer was familiar with both the translation and its French original, the points of resemblance between both of them and his version are too close to leave much doubt of this, though there is no other evidence.

In the hands of the Parson on the Canterbury Road, the sermon is full of very illogical but very human utterances concerning sin. Defining and illustrating his subject he says:—"Every time a man eateth or drinketh more than sufficeth to the sustenance of his body, it is certain he doth sin, and also when he speaketh more than needeth it is sin, also when he hearkeneth not benignly to the complaint of the poor it is sin, also when he is in health of body and will not fast when he ought to fast, without reasonable cause, also when he sleepeth more than needeth, also when he cometh by the same reason too late to Church or to other works of charity . . . also when he will not visit the sick and the prisoner if he may, also if he love wife or child or other worldly thing more than reason requireth, also if he flatter more than he ought for any necessity, also if he with-

draw or diminish the alms of the poor, also if he dresseth his meat more delicately than it need, or eat too hastily by greediness, or if he talk vanities at Church, or at God's service, or that he be a talker of idle words of folly, or of villainy, for he shall yield account of it at the day of doom." When he discourses on the Deadly Sins themselves, we realise that his sermon is full of poets' English, however it came by its logic. It is Friar Lourens who gives the theme, the figures of speech and the allegorical illustrations are all his, but it is Chaucer who clothes it with words. The sins are described as "Chieftaines of Sins ycleped chieftaines forasmuch as they be chief, and of them springeth all other sins. The roote of these Sinnes is Pride, the general roote of all harmes, for of this roote spring certain branches, as Wrath, Envy, Sloth, Covetousness, Gluttony, and Lechery. And each of these chief Sinnes hath his branches and his twigges." There is much in the exhortation against Pride that recalls the extravagance in dress, prevalent among the wealthy in Chaucer's day, and of the comparative failure of the various sumptuary laws to regulate the extravagance. Among its many definitions, Pride is finely described as "a swelling of the heart." The Sin of Envy follows that of Pride, and the Parson in dealing with the Sins gives some discourse on the remedy for each Sin in turn. This is a departure from the treatise of Friar Lourens, who brings in his remedial exhortations at the end of all. They are very beautiful exhortations to virtue and right living, and are used well by the Parson in his tale. Envy is described in the words

of St. Augustine as having "two species,"—"sorrow at other men's goodness," and "joye at other men's harm." Wrath grows out of envy naturally enough. "In the devil's furnace are forged three cursed ones. Pride that aye bloweth and increaseth the fire by chiding and wicked words, then standeth Envie and holdeth the hot iron on the heart of a man with a pair of long tongs of long rancour." Sloth is a study in decadence, a magnificent analysis of the effects on character of an utterly effortless and careless life. Slowly and surely we see the human sinking back into the bestial and losing all the characteristics which mark off man from his brother the ape. The poet is always ahead of the philosopher. That which was hailed as a new discovery in the nineteenth century was seen by the poetic and religious mind of the fourteenth, and described the more dramatically, because it was but seen through a glass darkly—reversion to an original type.

In all popular religious books of this period the Sins are greatly in evidence, but popular religious writings are seldom literature. The Sins are treated sometimes as a whole, and in their relations to each other, and sometimes separately. The fact that they fit in so exactly with the religious and penitential system of the Catholic Church has been used as a suggestion that the Sins were an invention of that Church. But the truth is they were facts of experience familiar to every man and woman who knew life, and the business of the Church was to set its spiritual ideals over against material facts, show the consequences of each, and bid mankind choose.



*Fra feros racione carens, stimulata furore
Quodlibet aggressor feruia atroque nefas
Causa ego quid faciem praeles Sichem non ene trucidet : Martin de 136
Et Iacob dextre quid tel Amagia cadat. Griffin de 1367*

WRATH.
(After De Vos.)

In "Old English Homilies," in "Aelfric's Homilies," in the "Cursor Mundi," in Robert of Brunne's "Handlyng Sinne," and in the "Mirror of St. Edmund," references to the Seven Deadly Sins are numerous; and the episode of Dante, "Purgatorio," Book II., resting on a terrace in Purgatory, and having the whole penitential system of the Church explained to him by Virgil, introduces us to the Sins in other literature than our own. The following passage from a thirteenth century poem, which has been ascribed to Dante, and has been rendered into English by Plumptre, shows very completely the spiritual aspect of the idea.

In Pride the root of every sin doth lie;
Hence man himself doth hold in loftier frame
Than others, and deserving lot more high.

Envy is that which makes us blush for shame,
With grief beholding others' happiness,
Like him, whom we the face of God proclaim.

Wrath still more woe doth on the wrathful press,
For its fierce mood lights up hell's fiery heat;
Then ill deeds come, and loss of holiness.

Sloth looks with hate on every action meet,
And to ill-doing ever turns the will,
Is slow to work, and quick to make retreat.

Then Avarice comes, through which the whole world still
Vexes its soul, and breaks through every law,
And tempts with gain to every deed of ill.

Both fool and wise foul Gluttony doth draw,
And he who pampers still his appetite,
Shortens his life, to fill his greedy maw.

And Lust that comes the seventh in order right,
The bonds of friendship breaks and brotherhood,
At variance still with Truth and Reason's light.

CHAPTER IV.

The Sins in Common Life.

THERE is no popular literature of the Middle Ages extant, which quite corresponds to the religious plays in influence over the lives of the common people: but the man who, outside the plays, was the great moving force in religious England of the fourteenth century was John Wycliffe (1325-1384?), and there is in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, a MS. reputed to be by him on the Seven Deadly Sins. It is of parchment, six-and-a-half by four-and-a-half inches in diameter, in small handwriting, containing thirty-two lines to a page. It is catalogued as "Wycliff's Tracts: The Creed and the Seven Deadly Sins," and the evidence as to its authorship was sufficient to satisfy Dr. Thomas Arnold, and to cause him to include it in his "Select English Works of Wycliffe." But Wycliffe had all the qualities and literary methods of a successful journalist, and if he lived to-day would almost certainly be a leader writer for the popular press, whereas this treatise—especially if it is read by the side of the prose treatise of Chaucer—is deadly dull. Even Wycliffe's name, supposing it to be by him, could hardly have made it popular, and we have to look elsewhere to trace the influence of the Sins in common life.

In the year 1493 there was published in Paris a remarkable volume entitled "Le Compost et kalendrier des bergiers," which ten years later (1503) was translated into English at the cost of Richard Pynson by the title of "The Kalendar of Shepherds." It was a most popular book in France, and it speedily became popular in England, and there is no wonder in this, for it is perhaps one of the most interesting books which the fifteenth century produced. The name of its author, or authors, is unknown, but they possessed the gift of writing on serious matters in a popular style, and the book is written by devout Catholics; ultimately for the good of humanity, but primarily in the interests of the Catholic Church. It is full of shrewd worldly wisdom, and not of the baser sort, of an imagination that is at once simple and strong, and of ideals of life that are robust and straightforward. It is written for all and sundry, but very special emphasis is laid on the necessity for instructing "lay folk." "This book," says the preface, "is very profitable, both for Clerks and lay people, to cause them to have a greater understanding, and in especial in that we be bound to learn and know on pain of everlasting death." It is a compilation of information concerning this world and the next, deals with equal wisdom and fulness with the needs of the body and the needs of the soul, and does not fail to show, in lurid and terrible fashion, the punishment that follows the commission of the Seven Deadly Sins.

It begins in allegorical form by telling simply and prettily the following story of a shepherd.—"Here

before time was a shepherd, keeping his sheep in the fields, who was no clerk, nor understood any manner of scripture or writing, but only by his natural wit. He sayeth that living and dying are all at the will and pleasure of Almighty God. And he sayeth that by the course of nature a man may live three score years and twelve, or more. For every man is thirty-six years old before he come to his full strength and virtue. And then he is at the best, both in wisdom and also in seriousness, and discretion. For by thirty six years, if so be that he have not good manners then, it is unlikely that ever he shall have good manners after while he live.

“Also likewise as a man is waxing and growing thirty-six years, so it is given him as many more to incline and go from the world by the gift of nature. And they that die before they be three score and twelve years old, oft-time it is by violence or outrage of themselves, and they that live above that term, it is by good government and good diet.

“The desire of this shepherd was to live long holily and die well. But this desire of long life was in his soul, which he hoped to have after death. For the soul shall never die, whether it be in bliss or pain.

“Therefore this shepherd thought that seventy-two years here in this vale of wretchedness, is but a little and a small term to the life everlasting, which shall never have ending.

“And he sayeth he that offereth himself here to live virtuously in this world, after this life he shall receive the sweet life that is sure, and lasteth ever without end. For though a man lived here a hundred

years or more, it is but a little term to the life to come. Therefore, says this shepherd, I will live soberly with these small temporal goods that Jesus hath lent me, and ever exile the desire of worldly riches and worldly worship. For they that labour for these and have a love to their goods, oft it deprives them of the heavenly treasure. It shutteth man's heart that God may not enter, and builds man a place of no rest in the low land of darkness."

This passage is followed by some wise discourse by the "master shepherd." It is not clear whether this person is meant to typify God, or simply a sage and kindly elder man: in the illustrations he is represented as a priest of high degree, but whoever he is meant to be, he is full of varied wisdom, and discourses with equal fluency on the four seasons, the twelve months of the year, the calendar and all that appertains thereto, the fixed and moveable festivals of the Church, the golden numbers and how to find them, the signs of the Zodiac, the changes of the moon, eclipses, physiology, botany, astronomy, and the doctrines of the Christian faith. In short, the "Kalendar of Shepherds" contains the information of an almanack, a book of medicine, and a religious encyclopædia besides, all written and arranged in a popular but in no sense a vulgar or commonplace way. Humour there is, but of the sly and kindly order, as the following lines on eclipses will show:—

An eclipse shall be marvellous to behold,
Through which many shall be the worse,
For they shall find neither silver nor gold,
It shall be so dark within their purse.

It is in the second part of the "Kalendar" that religious matters are dealt with, and like Chaucer the authors go straight to Friar Lourens for information about the Seven Deadly Sins. There are two treatises on the Sins, one in prose, and one rhymed. The prose is, so far as they are concerned, a translation of Lourens; the rhymed treatise, terribly long, but much the most interesting of the two, appears to be based on the prose one. It is all simply unblushing plagiarism. Everything is "lifted" shamelessly and nothing is acknowledged, and the only thing to be said in defence is that sometimes very good use is made of the stolen material. But it is probable that no thought of anything dishonest was present to the medieval mind in matters of literary "conveyance" like this. It may well have been that they regarded common truths as common property, and took passages out of religious treatises pretty much as modern religious writers take passages from the Bible, on the assumption that most of their readers will know where the passage occurs.

The old metaphor of the tree, its branches and twigs, was always excellent for didactic purposes, and perhaps it is improved in this "Kalendar" by being put into rhyme. The following brief preface is used to introduce the Deadly Seven:—

"In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we purpose to show the Vices, and moreover of sinners to understand their sins, the which is divided in seven principal parts, after the Seven Deadly Sins, and each Deadly Sin is likened to a tree, and every tree having

seven small branches, and all these seven trees cometh out of one tree by itself that is yellow, and cometh of one beginning and that is of the delight, and it bides an end that is everlasting damnation, which is ordained for them that seek not remedy betimes by penance and repentance by their life in time and hour. And hereafter followeth the tree of Vices, the pains of hell, to show the lay people what punishment is ordained for every Deadly Sin, and the people may the better show their Sins in confession, and make clean their conscience, that they may be the home of God, so that Virtues may grow and fructify to the profit of your souls."

The enumeration of the branches of each tree is curious, and in reading the rhymed exhortations to righteousness, we cannot fail to see that on its moral and spiritual side the philosophy of life taught by the medieval church, if occasionally simple, is thoroughly sound and healthy, and wherever it was lived up to must have created pure women and manly men. Lourens, from whom the whole spirit of the treatises in the "Kalendar" comes, wrote in the thirteenth century, a period which some present day scholars of eminence are acclaiming as one of the greatest centuries in European history. The Tree of Pride has seventeen great branches and endless small "sprigs and sprays." Envy has thirteen branches, and the first two are indicated here, as in Chaucer's "Parson's Tale," by the passage from St. Augustine "To desire thy neighbour's harm, to be glad of thy neighbour's ill name." Wrath has ten branches; Sloth seventeen,

out of which a hundred and thirty smaller branches grow. Covetousness has twenty, Gluttony five, and Lechery five. The presentation of vital truths in simple language, rather than originality, is aimed at in the homilies on the various phases of Christian dogma or faith. Lourens is laid largely under contribution for everything, and the old French friar must certainly have possessed one of the finest intellects of his century to have been such a source of religious inspiration and helpfulness for more than three hundred years.

Following the rhymed chronicle of the Sins, there comes this curious and homely piece of rhyming which again brings in the fatal seven, and which is called "a remembrance of the instability of the world."

Would every man bethink on his beginning
From whence he came and whereunto he shall,
Then would they serve alike both duke and king
And every lord both great and small.
Little wot they when they sit on their bench,
When Death will come, and off it make them fall ;
Away from him they may not ever wrench,
Though he be the greatest lord of all.
And for as one thing to thy mindé call ;
Trust not thy wisdom nor thine heir,
But do well here whate'er befall,
For this world is but a chery fare.

But well were he that were so wise,
That could be ware ere he be woe,
He were a man of full great price
In this world that could do so.
We waxé now so worldly nice
We cast our wits full far us fro,
Like to a player at the dice,
We wot not well whereto to go

Would we beware of the fiend our foe
 Lest that he should our souls apayre.
 Let us beware ere we be woe
 For this world is but a chery fare.

It hath ever been seen by day and night
 Oft a long time here beforne,
 There knoweth not the king nor knight
 Whether he shall live till morn.
 To-day though he be whole and light,
 And hunteth both with hound and horn,
 When he is man most in his might,
 In a short time thy life has gone.
 For on thy bier when thou art borne,
 Thou climbest then a slender stair ;
 Let thy good deeds, man, go beforne,
 For this world is but a chery fare.

This world now-a-days is ill to trust,
 For Covetise walketh about so wide,
 And to all other sins is over Lust,
 Both Envy and Sloth, Lechery and Pride.
 And Simony full sweet is kissed
 And on high horses dothē ride.
 Some locketh him full fast in his chest
 And sets it night to his bed's side.
 But the day shall come they shall curse the tide,
 Both baron, burgess, priest and mayor,
 That ever they did that time abide,
 For this world is but a chery fare.

Where is thy treasure, there's thy mind,
 So saith thy gospel if thou look :
 Alack men why be to Jesus so unkind,
 To love so much a little muck,
 And all that shall thou leave behind,
 Though thou love ravening as a rook ;
 Goods of this world make many blind
 And the fiend then taketh with many a crook.

Now Jesus who Mary to thy mother took,
That was ever clearest under the air,
Thou wash us in thy merciful brook,
For this world is but a chery fare.

There is much in the “*Kalendar*” which can be read as a plea for a simple life. The shepherd in his meadows piping to his sheep, is held by the authors to have a better chance of human happiness than the courtier or the pleasure seeker. No suggestion is however made that mere pleasant environment is sufficient to create good life: the sins can be anywhere; the shepherd may admit them to his hut, or the king to his palace, and the consequence will be the same in either place. A tremendous emphasis is laid on personal responsibility always and everywhere, even in merely secular ills. Health and holiness seem often interchangeable terms, and a man gets credited occasionally with the cause of his illness, as he does with the guilt of his sin. There is much common sense in the book, but it is not simply common sense, it is touched often with a fine imagination.

Of the various editions of the “*Kalendar*” Mr. Heinrich Oskar Sommer, whose reprint published in 1892 is a veritable treasure to the collector of rare books, enumerates thirty-eight in French and English, but is of opinion that not more than two-thirds of the editions that were published have come down to us. Four were published in Paris, and one in Geneva between 1493 and 1500; seven are known to have been published in Paris, four in Lyons, four in Troyes, one in Rouen, and ten in London during the sixteenth

century ; one in Paris and five in London in the seventeenth century ; other editions were published at Troyes in 1705 and 1729. Of the edition in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, printed on vellum in the year 1500 by Guiot Marchant, Mr. Sommer says "It is one of the finest books ever produced." The "Kalendar" belongs to the domain of literary archæology, but it has enough of quaint homely wisdom, religious feeling, and old-world humour, as well as the elusive element of charm, to make another reprint desirable in the interest of the reading world.

The tree metaphor was largely used by artists, and pictures of the Seven Deadly Sins as the seven branches of a tree whose roots grew in the pit of hell, were not uncommon on the walls of English churches, though very few of them remain now. The fanaticism of the seventeenth century, and the whitewash of the eighteenth, destroyed much that was of historic or of antiquarian interest in our parish churches, and many a quaint and curious picture of the Sins may lie hidden under lime-wash. Some sixty years ago there was found in Catfield Church a picture of the tree of the Seven Sins. It was, as usual, whitewashed over again, but an engraving of it was made for the Norfolk Archæological Society. The picture shows a tree rising out of the mouth of Hell. Hell's mouth is represented by a pair of open jaws, well toothed, and not unlike the mouth of a gigantic whale. It was the ordinary method of picturing Hell's mouth in the Middle Ages, and it lasted well on to the eighteenth century, and may be found in old editions of popular books like the "Pilgrim's

Progress" or "Drelincourt on Death." The seven branches are seven fiends; in the mouth of each is a sinner, about whose waist a chain is bound, at which other devils, who are standing in Hell's mouth, are tugging vigorously, apparently to show that the sinner will only escape from the bondage of the Sin to fall into the mouth of Hell below. At Crostwright Church and at Brooke Church, also in Norfolk, and at Ingatestone Church, Essex, pictures of the Sins are under the whitewash on the walls. At Arundel Church, Sussex, there is a picture representing the Sins in the seven spokes of a wheel, and there are also some frescoes (whitewashed) of them in the chapel of the Guild of the Holy Cross, Stratford-on-Avon.

It is to the Church pictures and the minor writers that we must go to find out the place of the Sins in the religion of the peasant, the artisan, and the serf; and this is seen very completely in a poem entitled "Instructions to Parish Priests," published by the Early English Text Society, and written in the fifteenth century. Its author is one, John Myrc, who was himself a parish priest in Shropshire during the latter half of that century. It is, so he informs us, not his own work, but a translation of a Latin work called "Pars Oculi." There is no reason to doubt his statement, but the original has not been discovered. Whoever was its author, he was a wise and kindly-hearted man. Reading, it is easy to see that the good parish priest of the Middle Ages was not essentially different from the good parson of the present day. He was the guide, philosopher, and friend of the people among whom he

lived. He had to face such problems as bad housing and over-crowding, and the sleeping of growing boys and girls in the same room; and he talked to his parishioners about them pretty much as Kingsley might have done. It is a popular notion that what have been called the "Dark Ages" were choked with superstition. Superstition will always be found in some form or other, given the necessary temperamental conditions, but it is probable there was not more superstition in the fifteenth century than in the seventeenth or eighteenth, only it was of a different character. And certainly there is almost none in the poem of John Myrc. The social life of the medieval parish, as well as its religious and ethical standards, are revealed in "*The Questions on the Seven Deadly Sins.*" If this parish is to be taken as typical, things were neither better nor worse in English villages in the fifteenth century than they are to-day. There were fewer people, and certainly fewer books, but the religious standards were as high, and the moral ones not appreciably lower than those of our own century.

The poem begins by instructing the priest what he must learn, and how he must live himself, before he undertakes to teach others. This is followed by a system of moral and religious teaching which covers the whole of life from the cradle to the dying bed. Some simple and practical instructions are given to the midwife concerning her duties at the birth of the child and the baptism of it, should the necessity arise, by her, as well as the form of words to be used in the baptismal ceremony. The words are:—"Ego baptizo

te N., in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti. Amen." But she is free to use the English words if she can speak no Latin.

English or Latin whichever be saith
It sufficeth for the faith.

Following baptism comes confirmation, with wise advice to young men and maidens, which was in all probability not better followed than advice of the same character is to-day; and then marriage and an exposition of doctrine and the duties of life. The teaching of the "Instructions" in all that relates to individual character, social duty, and the responsibilities of citizenship, leaves little to be desired if we remember the ideals which then obtained.

Another side of social life is shewn in the instructions as to hearing confession and the methods of the confessional, and it is a very simple and homely life indeed.

When anyone hath done a sin,
Look he lives not long therein;
But anon that he him shrive,
Be it husband, be it wife,
Lest he forget by Lenten's day,
And out of mind it go away.

Priest and people appear to live in close kinship, without arrogance on the one side or servility on the other; and outside the sphere of religious duties there is a suggestion of pleasant equality between the shepherd and his flock. Facts are faced frankly in questions on sensual Sins, and—given the confessional as a religious institution—it is difficult to see how it could

have been better conducted than along the lines laid down in Myrc's "Instructions." An examination on breaches of the ten commandments follows the questions as to soundness of doctrine; and the penitent is then examined on the Seven Deadly Sins.

Of Deadly Sins now also
I will ask now ere thou go.
Therefore, son, spare thou nought
To tell how thou hast them wrought.

Pride is the foundation Sin from whose root all other Sins spring, and to it, therefore, is given the largest share in the "shrift father's examination." Is the penitent a boaster, making proclamation of his good deeds, or fraudulent, having appropriated the good deeds of others? Has he, for the sake of getting honour from man, disparaged or oppressed his neighbour? Is he vain of his personal beauty, his apparel, or his worldly possessions, and has he treated contemptuously those who lack these things? Is his pride spiritual, does he boast his virtue or his holiness? All these things are manifestations of the Deadly Sin of Pride, and must be purged by contrition and penance. From Pride the priest passes to Sloth, and the questions on this Sin scarcely suggest anything very deadly. Has he been slow to come to church, has he hindered others coming, slept during sermon time, been loth to fast, slow to go on pilgrimage, to teach children or to do works of charity? The last two questions are of importance, and the neglect of the duties to which they refer can fairly be classified as deadly; but in dealing with other manifestations of

this sin the writer seems to have missed his aim. It is quite easy to see the ill consequences that may spring either from spiritual, mental, or bodily sluggishness, and the use a wise confessor could have made of advice on these things; but the time is frittered away on what are, after all, minor aspects of the Sin of Sloth. The very questions dealing with Envy, show us the smaller vices of society as they are in every age. Speaking ill of people whom we dislike, and whose good fortune we are envious of, is a sin that is always with us; and in the havoc it can make of human happiness may be deadly indeed. It is the savage side of man that is unveiled in the questions concerning Wrath; in Gluttony and Lechery the beast stands revealed; and Avarice, grey haired and grasping, is scarcely human in his hideousness. Only a priest, well grounded in the principles of his faith, could have retained belief in human nature at all if his experience brought him much into contact with phases of life like these.

In a poem entitled the "Mirror of the Period of Man's Life," printed by the Early English Text Society from a manuscript in the library of Lambeth Palace, written probably about the same time as Myrc's tractate, the Sins appear as persons, and no longer as mere influences. They act as direct tempters of man, the story of whose entry into the world is told in a finely imaginative passage.

In a winter night ere I waked
In my sleep I dreamed so;
I saw a child mother-naked
New born the mother fro (from),

AVARITIA



Perdita Avaritiae, corrasis obruta, visit
Magnas inter opes semper egena et inops.
Cancororum radix vitorum perdidit Achab.
Non juvenor. Dicitus avaritia fit lacro aires Achab. Crispa de teste
secu et exca.

COVETOUSNESS.

(After De Vos.)

All alone as God him maked ;
 In the wildernes he did go
 Till the governance he taked
 An angel friend, an angel foe.

It is a child of the middle classes to whom we are thus introduced, with money at his command, and as manhood comes on he may live his life pretty much as he will. At twenty we see him between two counsellors, Reason and Passion, and the Seven Deadly Sins are waiting at the door.

Quoth Reason, "In age of twenty years
 Go to Oxenforde or learn the law :"
 Quoth Lust, "Harp and giterne may ye lere
 And pricked staff and buckler wherewith to play,
 At taverne to make women merry cheer,
 And wild fellows together draw."

His fortunes are followed from the age of twenty to that of a hundred, and as the poem passes from stage to stage the reader is reminded a little of the "Seven Ages," of Shakespeare, but the distant resemblance is certainly accidental, as the poem was in manuscript and there is no evidence that Shakespeare ever read it. The picture of age, when all the Sins save Sloth and Covetousness have left the man, is full of dramatic pathos and power, as the various stages of advancing years are depicted.

Now I am sixty years and ten
 Young folk I find my foe,
 Wherever they play or leap or run,
 They say that in their way I go ;
 And when I meet with oldé men,
 I playne this world is changed so.

.

Now four score years have passed
My life is but travail and woe,
For I into rereage am cast
Into ten years and mo.

Now am I under Fortune's wheel
My friends forsake me every one,
And all the sins I loved so well
Now well I wot have been my doom.

Mine age is now a hundred year;
Little I drink, and less I eat,
On my back I bear my bier,
And all my friends do me forget.

The Virtues, which were ever pleading in his soul, lead him to seek Divine mercy, and bring him peace at last, and the hell hounds which "bark and bite," and the phantom of "Wanhope," a quaintly poetic name for Despair, are banished for ever, and we are asked to

Pray for the soul that wrote this tale
A pater noster and an ave
To Mary mother, maiden free,
Who bare a child to comfort us;
On that soul have pity
If the will be of Christ Jesus.

Another fifteenth century poem entitled "Give me Lysens to live at ease" is of a different and—so far as the religious spirit of it is concerned—of a more exalted kind. It is the cry of a tortured Soul that desires to follow the paths of righteousness, but cannot by reason of the Seven Evil Influences.

To live at ease, thy lawes to keep,
Grant me grace, Lord, in bliss so bright
That I may never in that cabin creep
That Lucifer locks in withouten light.

They are all there in their order, and the Soul must needs do battle with them if it would "live at ease." The little poem has a haunting pathos, as have all poems of storm and stress, but there is nothing great in it, and it is probably the work of a monkish minor poet, full of religious and poetic feeling, but with no touch of the divine fire.

CHAPTER V.

The Sins and the Reformation.

A TRUE history of the social and religious upheaval which Englishmen call the Reformation yet remains to be written, but one of its most clearly defined phases is that of a revolt against symbolism and allegory of every kind, a revolt against permanent and natural human instincts. If the Reformers were often sincere and loyal souls, ready to die for an idea in which they believed, whether it were right or wrong, they were often, too, utterly ignorant people in conflict with ideas they did not understand. They were not lovers of liberty, though their principles made for it, and they gave no liberty to any who thought otherwise than they did. Their intellectual vision was narrower, their religious philosophy less human, and their imaginative outlook coarser and more crude in all its conceptions than that of the religion whose teaching they repudiated, and whose wholesome solid social life they overthrew. A bitter intolerance was the dominant spirit of the time, and the Reformers often represented that spirit in its lowest and most unlovely form. Religious differences converted neighbours and relatives into spies on each others' actions. John Foxe records how the charming pages of the "Kalendar of Shepherds" were made by

Catholics an instrument of religious intolerance and persecution. "In 1519, John Edmunds, otherwise called John Ogins of Burford, did detect Philip Brabant, servant of Richard Collins, for saying that the sacrament of the altar was made in remembrance of Christ's own body, but was not the body of Christ. 'The Shepherd's Kalendar' was also accused and detected, because the same Edmunds said that he was persuaded by this book, reading the words 'That the sacrament was made in remembrance of Christ.'" Froude, who was an enemy to the Catholic Church, has said ;—"To the Universities the Reformation had brought with it desolation. To the people of England it had brought misery and want. The once open hand was closed ; the once open heart was hardened ; the ancient loyalty of man to man was exchanged for scuffling and selfishness ; the change of faith had brought with it no increase of freedom and less of charity. The prisons were crowded with sufferers for opinion, and the creed of a thousand years was made a crime by a doctrine of yesterday." Hallam, a Protestant to the core, has said with equal force and directness : "Persecution is the deadly original sin of the reformed churches ; that which cools every honest man's zeal for their cause, in proportion as his reading becomes more extensive."

But it has to be admitted that the Catholic Church, which had been supreme in England for a thousand years, was content to see great masses of men and women grow up in ignorance around it, and there is no evidence that it made any effort to do even the

elementary duties of a Church towards them, and teach them the first principles of its own faith. It is the appalling ignorance of the people concerning the faith of their own Church that is so striking at this time: plays, poems, sermons, and public speeches all bear evidence of this ignorance, and yet the time was full of intellectual energy. The Catholic Church had no opponents in its own sphere when the Reformation began, and the spiritual life of the nation was entirely in its hands; that it came to be regarded with hatred or with ignorance, is the most damning evidence that can be produced of its failure as a spiritual force. It embodied in its teaching a larger conception of life, and finer and more magnificent idealism, than anything the Reformed religions could show, and yet people turned from it to the dry bones of Protestantism, and went cheerfully to the fire rather than to the nation's ancient faith. Rightly or wrongly, they held that the ecclesiastical system under which they had lived for centuries had deceived them; that it was a fraud and a lie. The newer faith, which so many loyal souls held to be the river of the water of life, was at its best but a turbid and muddy stream; but the people of England chose it for their drinking because they believed there was poison in the ancient river. Why these things were history has not fully shown. The Protestant hatred of Rome is based largely on prejudice and ignorance, but the Catholic Church must purge herself of many stains and evils before she can stand justified before the tribunal of history.

That the allegorical and mystical presentation of the Sins should suffer change when all round was changing

was inevitable, but it lingered long in the imagination after it ceased to have the sanction of faith. And however deep the revolt against symbolism in religion, nothing could banish it from literature, and here we may trace it; if in a lesser degree as a moral influence, remaining as a literary form for yet a couple of centuries to come.

Stephen Hawes (1483-1523), courtier and poet, and chiefly courtier, in an allegory called the "Pastime of Pleasure," published in 1506, has many "Sevens" among his allegorical personages. There are seven sciences, and the beast with the seven heads (manifestly from the Apocalypse), upon whose seven crowns are inscribed the names Delay, Dissimulation, Discomfort, Variance, Envy, Distraction, and Doubleness; but the Sins in their church order nowhere appear. The book has material in it that has probably been used by the compilers of popular fairy stories of a later time. Giants with numerous heads, enchanted castles, and magic horns, are mixed up curiously with pagan legends and the verities of the Christian faith, and there are passages in it so closely resembling the "Pilgrim's Progress" as to make it certain that Bunyan—whose reading was certainly wider than popular biographers make out—was familiar with its pages. Hawes is perhaps only remembered now by the following couplet, which, it has been conjectured, was not his own, but a popular utterance which he appropriated and polished up:—

For though the day be never so long,
At last the bells ringeth to evensong.

If he is the man of culture writing poetry, rather than the poet, he is frankly, and withal modestly, conscious of the fact, as the following lines from the prologue to the “Example of Virtue” show. He is a disciple who gives fullest reverence to his masters:

O prudent Gower! in language pure
Without corruption, most facundious!
O noble Chaucer! ever most sure
Of fruitful sentence right delicious!
O virtuous Lydgate! much sententious!
Unto you all, I do me excuse,
Though I your cunning now do use.

Hugh Latimer, Bishop of Worcester (1485-1555), among the many good stories with which he garnishes his sermons, has a story relating to the Sins. It was told to bring ridicule on the Romish clergy, and no doubt served its purpose well. “I will tell you now,” said Latimer, “a pretty story of a friar to refresh you withal. A limitor of the gray friars in the time of his limitation preached many times, and had but one sermon at all times, which sermon was of the ten commandments. And because this friar had preached this sermon so often, one that heard it before told the friar’s servant that his master was called Friar John Ten Commandments; whereupon the servant showed the friar his master thereof, and advised him to preach of some other matters, for it grieved the servant to hear his master derided. Now the friar made answer saying, ‘Belike then thou knowest all the ten commandments well, seeing thou hast heard them so many times.’ ‘Yea,’ said the servant ‘I war-

rant you.' 'Let me hear them,' saith the master. Then he began, 'Pride, Covetousness, Lechery,' and so numbered the sins for the ten commandments." Latimer makes no other reference than this to the Sins in their numerical arrangement, but has a good deal to say about mortal and venial sins, and, sturdy protestor against Rome though he was, here advocates strongly and clearly the Roman doctrine.

The Seven Deadly Sins are once more in the hands of genius when we meet them in the poetry of William Dunbar (1450?-1520?). The range, power and fearlessness of Dunbar's genius entitle him to rank with the greatest English writers of the fifteenth century: in his own country he has rarely, if ever, been surpassed by poets of any age. His genius is of an entirely different type to that of Robert Burns, and no direct comparison can be instituted between them. But in the possession of qualities which make up the finest poetry, he is always the equal and not seldom the superior of the great peasant poet. Historically he is little more than a shadow. He was probably born in the year 1450; it is conjectured that he died in 1520. His name is entered on the registers of St. Andrew's University as a Bachelor of Arts in 1477. From his birth it would appear that he was intended for the Church, as in one of his poems is found the following lines:—

I was in youth on nurse's knee
"Dandely bischop, dandeley,"
And when that age now does me grip
Ane simple Vicar I cannot be.

He took the Master's degree in 1479, and apparently after some wild and licentious years became a Franciscan Friar. He says the devil made him one; if so Satan must be credited with excellent judgement. There was never a priest with less of unreality or cant, never a friar who lashed more pitilessly the vices of his order or his time. Apparently he was a man of eloquence, visiting as a preacher both England and France, and preaching in Canterbury Cathedral. He was a constant attendant at the Court of James IV, was patronised by the Queen Margaret, who was sister to Henry VIII, was in receipt of royal bounty, and had said mass before the King. But he lashed the vices of the Court with as much zest as he did those of the Church; perhaps that is why, with all his royal friendships, he never obtained a benefice worth the having. His poetry is instinct with fire and passion; but, human to the very heart of him though he is, his passion never overmasters his judgement. Hating with bitter and relentless hatred all that was false and unreal in the Church to which he belonged, he yet never confuses the ideal with the lapses from it of its false professors. There is no more terrible realisation of the dramatic possibilities of the Sins in all literature than is found in the *Dance of the Seven Deadly Sins* by William Dunbar. Even Marlowe in his handling of the same subject is not the equal of the poet priest. The dance takes place in the streets of Hell on the eve of Ash Wednesday. The devil, who is called Mahoun, an old way of designating the fiend in the middle ages, calls for a dance on the last day before Lent, and the

Sins dance and make mirth in Hell, as if they knew their power and might laugh the prayer and penitence of mankind to scorn. When the peals of hellish laughter cease, and the dance of Hell has ended, by a strange mad turn of incident the poem resolves itself into an attack on the party Dunbar hated, and ends with what in the hands of a smaller man would have been buffoonery, but in Dunbar is an exhibition of fierce savage humour, perhaps weakened a little by party spite. The poem must speak for itself.

Of Februar', the fifteenth night,
 Full long before the dayès light,
 I lay in till a trance ;
 And then I saw both Heaven and Hell.
 Methought, among the fiendès fell,
 Mahoun gart cry a Dance
 Of Shrewès that were never shriven,
 Against the Feast of Fastern's Even,
 To make their observance.
 He bade gallants go graith a Guise ;
 And cast up gambols to the skies,
 That last came out of France.

“Let see,” quod he, “now who begins?”
 With that, the foul Seven Deadly Sins
 Began to leap at once :
 And first of all in dance was Pride,
 With hair wyld back and bonnet on side,
 Like to make waste wanis ;
 And round about him, as a wheel,
 Hung, all in rumples, to the heel,
 His cassock for the nonce.
 Many a proud trompeur with him tripped ;
 Through scalding fire, aye, as they skipped,
 They groaned with hideous groans.

Holy harlots in haughty wise,
 Came in, with many a sundry guise ;
 But never laughed Mahoun
 Till priests came in, with bare shaven necks ;
 Then all the fiends laughed, and made gecks,
 Black Belly and Bawsy Brown.

Then, Ire came in with sturt and strife,
 His hand was aye upon his knife,
 He brandished like a bear.
 Boasters, braggarts, and Bargainers,
 After him, passèd in to pairs,
 All ready in feir of war.
 In jacks, and scrips, and bonnets of steel,
 Their legs were chainèd to the heel,
 Forward was their affeir :
 Some, upon other with brandès beft ;
 Some jaggèd others to the heft,
 With knives, that sharp could shear.

Next, in the Dance, followed Envy,
 Filled full of feud and felony,
 Hid malice and despite ;
 For privy hatred that traitor trembled !
 Him followed many freke dissembled,
 With feignèd wordès white ;
 And Flatterers to men's faces,
 And Backbiters of sundry races,
 To lie that had delight ;
 And Rowners of false leasings.
 Alas ! that Courts of noble Kings
 Of them can never be quit !

Next in the Dance, came Covatrice,
 Root of all evil, and ground of vice ;
 That never could be content !
 Cowards, wretches, and okerers,
 Misers, hoarders, and gatherers,
 All with that warlock went !
 Out of their throats, they shot on other[s]
 Hot molten gold, methought, a fodder,



Luria Gula facies, et faleunda mensa Lyrei
Heu quot praeceps dat, dedit, atque dabit :
Causa fuit Lotfo incestus : tyndonique Nabalem
Perdidit immodici sumptuio grata cibi. Crisp. d'Ass. fe. et exc.

As lightning most fervent :

Aye, as they emptied them of shot,
Fiends filled them anew up to the throat,
With gold of all kinds (of) print.

Then Sloth that at the second bidding
Came like a sow out of a midden,
Full sleepy was his face.

Many a lazy stupid glutton,
And slattern daw and sleepy sloven,
Him servèd aye with sounyie.

He drew them forth in till a chain,
And Belial with a bridle rein,
Ever lashed them on the lunyie.

In Dance they were so slow of feet,
They gave them in the fire a heat ;
And made them swift of counyie.

Then, Lechery, that loathly corse,
Came neighing like a bagit horse ;
And Idleness did him lead.

There were with him an ugly sort,
And mony stinking foul tramort,
That had in sin been dead.

When they were entered in the Dance,
They were full strange of countenance,
Like torches burning red.

Then, the foul monster Gluttony,
Of womb insatiable and greedy,
To dance he did him dress.

Him followed mony foul drunkard,
With can and collop, cup and quart,
In surfeit and excess.

Full many a waist-less wallydrag,
With wames unwieldy, did forth wag,
In grease that did increase.

Drink ! aye they cried with many a gape.
The fiends gave them hot lead to lap ;
Their thirst was none the less.

No Minstrels played to them, but doubt !
For Gleemen there, were holden out
 By day and eke by night ;
 Except a Minstrel that slew a man ;
 So till his heritage he wan,
 And entered by *Brief of Right*.
Then cried Mahoun for a Highland Pageant ;
Syne ran a fiend to fetch Makfadyane,
 Far northward in a nook.
 By he the Coronach had done shout,
 Erschemen so gathered him about,
 In Hell great room they took.

Those termagants with tag and tatter,
Full loud in Ersche began to chatter ;
 And roup like raven and rook.
 The Devil so deafened was, with their yell,
 That in the deepest pit of Hell,
 He smothered them with smoke.

A curious antiquary, Mr. J. Chalmers, has calculated that the only years in Dunbar's lifetime when Shrove Tuesday fell on February 15, were 1496, 1507, and 1518, and hazards a guess that the poem must have been written in one of the first two years.

Dunbar brings us to the eve of the Reformation, when men's minds were beginning to change in their attitude towards the Sins. The comedy as well as the tragedy of evil had always been present to the medieval imagination, but it was the comedy rather than the tragedy that was present to the imagination of this new world which was to supersede the old. "The Devil is an Ass" said Ben Jonson, and experience without the aid of argument would easily prove that the sinner is always a fool. But the problem of evil was passing out of the hands of the priests, if not of the

theologians, and influenced by the teaching of Calvin was to take horrible and inhuman forms, under whose sway noble natures became base, and generous souls exchanged their generosity for a creed that libelled God and man. The Seven Deadly Sins, by reason of their close correspondence with the facts of life, as well as by their appeal to the imagination and to the mystical side of human nature, were to hold their place among those whose imagination remained untrammelled by the subtleties of a theological rather than a religious time. The old problem typified by the Sins stirred men's hearts; but it was taking another and a darker aspect, and was discussed sometimes with faith and hope, sometimes with savage and inhuman rancour, and sectarian bitterness:—

Providence, foreknowledge, will and fate,
Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute
And found no end in wandering mazes lost.”

CHAPTER VI.

The Sins and the Elizabethans.

THE group of men who were gathered together at the Court of Elizabeth, and who gave character and personality to the most glorious years of her glorious reign, are entirely unique in our history. We detect no shadow of them before that reign began: they pass away with its ending. They seem to spring into life as if at an enchanter's bidding; they were born of a new passion which England had never felt before, the passion for nationality and freedom. Elizabeth felt this new passion, and her people knew it; hence their loyalty to and worship of their queen. What they believed in she believed in too; she lived their life, and became to them an ideal of perfect queenliness and perfect womanhood. Fulsome and grotesque as many of the utterances of the Elizabethan poets to their royal mistress seem to-day, they were true and real then, and represented the devotion and affection with which the finest spirits of her nation regarded her. The exquisite lines of George Peele—

Blessed be the hearts that wish my sovereign well,
Cursed be the souls that think her any wrong,

found an echo in the hearts of his fellow-countrymen. There is a strange sense of youthfulness in these strong men as we look on their pictures and read their acts

and words. They were a group of hot-blooded imaginative boys, who fought the fights and sang the songs of one of the most glorious epochs through which the world has ever passed ; but they were masters of the spiritual forces that were moulding England's life, and their strength was born of the freedom which came to them as a new heritage, full of glorious possibilities, as manhood comes to aspiring youth.

But great though the epoch was to the life of the nation, it brought evil times for the Catholic Church, and for those who still held to its faith. That Church was reaping as it had sown. Its Popes had for a century and more been no spiritual fathers to Englishmen, but simply foreign princes who sweated their revenues and their people where they could, and filled English bishoprics with foreign nominees. Englishmen, perhaps the majority, held to the ancient faith till that faith and its representatives seemed to be a danger to the life of the nation, and then new knowledge and newer thought made alliance with national feeling and necessity, and combined for its overthrow. But its leading ideas lived on, though its ecclesiastical system was discredited, and Protestantism, in spite of its vauntedings about the Bible, drew its highest spiritual inspirations from the Catholic Church. Catholic allegory lived, though it took other forms ; and the Seven Deadly Sins, if they held no theological significance for the Elizabethans, remained as an imaginative asset, which had by no means lost its value.

In the hands of Richard Tarlton, the famous Court jester and comedian of Elizabeth's days, the Sins formed

matter for mirth rather than homily. But all that is left of what he wrote concerning them is the famous “Platt” among the MSS. of Dulwich College, and this tells us practically nothing. We have a glimpse of John Lydgate, of Henry VI, and other dramatic personalities; and the Seven Sins cross and recross the stage with no apparent reason, for there is not even a foreshadowing of any coherent story or possibility of saying what the play was like from the skeleton that remains. Tarlton died in 1588, and this was the year of the production of Marlowe’s “Tamburlaine the Great.” The ancient faith of England was being exposed to ridicule on all sides, and it was but natural that the Sins should share the scorn that was being poured on doctrines more vital to catholic truth than they were. It is in Marlowe’s “Faustus” that the Seven Deadly Sins make their last appearance in drama, and “Faustus” may very well be called the last of the mystery plays. In form and spirit it greatly resembles them, and notwithstanding the reputation of its author for atheism, is an intensely religious play. Mephistophilis is an incarnation of the power of evil, and at times scoffs bitterly at goodness and virtue. But at other times he preaches with an eloquence and a fervour which would have done credit to any of Elizabeth’s bishops. The Sins are in their natural environment in “Faustus,” but it is the comedy of evil that they present, and we laugh at them with a hearty full-blooded mirth, for there is no touch of the hideousness or the horror with which they were clothed by the earlier poets. The laughter of Marlowe

is human laughter at human folly ; there is laughter in Dunbar too, but it is the laughter of the fiends in hell. The Sins appear in the second scene of the first act of "Faustus," and are introduced very befittingly by Mephistophilis.

Beelzebub. Now, Faustus, question them of their names and dispositions.

Faust. That shall I soon. What art thou, the first?

Pride. I am Pride, I disdain to have any parents. I am like to Ovid's flea, I can creep into every corner of a wench, sometimes like a periwig I sit upon her brow, next like a necklace I hang about her, then like a fan of feathers I kiss her, and then turning myself to a wrought smock do what I list. But fie, what a smell is here ! I'll not speak a word more for a king's ransom, unless the ground be perfumed, and covered with cloth of arras.

Faust. Thou art a proud knave indeed what art thou, the second?

Covet. I am Covetousness, begotten of an old churl in a leathern bag, and might I now obtain my wish, this house, you and all should turn to gold that I might lock you safe into my chest. O my sweet gold !

Faust. And what art thou, the third?

Env. I am Envy, begotten of a chimney-sweeper and an oyster wife. I cannot read, and therefore wish all books were burned. I am lean with seeing others eat. O that there would come a famine over all the world, that all might die, and I live alone, then thou should'st see how fat I'd be ! But must thou sit, and I stand ? Come down with a vengeance.

Faust. Out envious wretch ! But what art thou, the fourth?

Wrath. I am Wrath : I had neither father nor mother : I leapt out of a lion's mouth when I was scarce an hour old ; and I have been ever since running up and down the world with this case of rapiers, pounding myself when I could get none to fight withal. I was born in hell, and look to it, for some of you shall be my father.

Faust. And what art thou, the fifth?

Glut. I am Gluttony, my parents are all dead, and the devil a penny they have left me but a small pension : and that buys me thirty meals a day and ten beavers, a small trifle to suffice nature. I come

of a royal pedigree, my father was a gammon of bacon, and my mother was a hogshead of claret wine; my godfathers were these, Peter Pickled Herring and Martin Martlemas Beef, but my Godmother, oh ! she was an ancient gentlewoman, her name was Margery March-beer. Now Faustus thou hast heard all my progeny, wilt thou bid me to supper?

Faust. Not I.

Glut. The devil choke thee.

Faust. Choke thyself, Glutton. What art thou, the sixth?

Sloth. Heigho ! I am Sloth. I was begotten on a sunny bank. Heigho ! I'll not speak a word more for a king's ransom.

Faust. And what art thou, Mistress Minx, the seventh and last?

Lechery. Who, I Sir ? I am one that loves an inch of raw mutton better than an ell of fried stockfish, and the first letter of my name begins with—Lechery.

Lucifer. Away to hell, away. On ! piper.

[*Exeunt the Seven Sins.*]

Edmund Spenser (1552?-1599), is the next poet who introduces us to the Seven Deadly Sins, and his verse contains and conveys in fullest measure the spirit of the Elizabethan age. With Marlowe it is otherwise, and we are continually conscious in his writings of that other world of thought and feeling with which he was constantly at war, and out of which he was slowly and painfully emerging. He had deeper sympathies with it than he knew, in spite of many wild utterances of revolt, and would certainly have realised them had he lived to mature years. But his life ended before his youth, and he remains the glorious but strangely erratic morning star of Elizabethan poetry, shining on the old thought and the new alike, but loving the old even while he, with all a boy's unreasoning passion, poured scorn upon it. But Spenser lived in the newer world, and was of it as well as with

it. He had no quarrel with the older faith and its forms as Marlowe had; for him it was too far off to quarrel with, and in dealing with the Sins he no longer payed regard to the mystical number seven, but reduced the number to six, making the seventh personage in the group Satan himself.

The Six Sins are the counsellors of the “foul Duessa,” and it is a generally accepted theory that by Duessa Spenser meant Mary Queen of Scots. No external evidence exists in support of it, but the internal evidence is strong and conclusive, and if we accept it, places the poet in a different light to that in which he is generally regarded. Mary Stuart represented in her own person all the ideas and principles with which Spenser as a typical Protestant Englishman was at war. That she is at the head of the procession of Deadly Sins seems to show that he meant her to take the place of Pride, the foundation sin of all the rest. But though Mary could maintain herself with royal dignity, if necessity demanded, pride was hardly the dominant element in her character; indeed it was more manifest in Elizabeth than in her rival. Mary could be tender, gracious and womanly when she chose, and these were qualities in which Elizabeth did not excel. Neither Una, as a representation of Queen Elizabeth, nor Duessa as Mary Queen of Scots, is a triumph of allegorical art. According to Gabriel Harvey the first book of the “Faerie Queen” was written in 1580, and the execution of the Queen of Scots did not take place till 1587. It is in Book I, Canto iv, that we meet the procession of the Deadly Sins, and there too occur the

passages which form the only unclean spot in Spenser's perfect and beautiful verse.

The "Roiall dame," who "for her coach doth call," is drawn therein by "six unequal beasts" on which six of the Sins are mounted, the first of them being our old friend Sloth under his Spenserian name of Idleness:—

The nourse of sinne
Upon a slothful asse he chose to ryde,
Arrayed in habit black and amis thin,
Like to an holy Monck, the service to begin.

19

And in his hands his portesse still he bore
That much was worne, but therein little redd,
For of devotion he hadd little care,
Still drown'd in sleep and most of his daies dedd
Scarce could he once uphold his heavie hedd,
To looken whether it were night or day ;
May seem the wayne was very evil ledd,
When such an one had guiding of the way
That knew not whether right he went or else astray.

20

From worldly cares himself he did esloyne,
And greatly shunnéd manly exercise ;
From every work he challengéd essoyne,
For contemplation's sake : yet otherwise
His life he led in lawless riotise,
By which he grew to grievous malady :
For in his lustlesse limbs, through evil guise,
A shaking fever raged continually ;
Such one was Idlenesse, first of this company.

There is nothing that is new in Spenser's description of Sloth. All its details are medieval, and it only differs from other word-pictures of the same vice in the form of the verse. It is otherwise with Gluttony.

PIGRITIA.



Segnities enorme malum juuenumque seniisque,

At juuernum Syren blanda, querela senum.

Otia adulterij Davidi causa fiere.

Neglectatque Dei iussa vir ille Dei.

Martin de 735
muerto

SLOTH.

Vt in De Uer.

He is classical rather than medieval, a drunken bacchanal rather than an incarnate Vice. The description of him is disgusting enough, and savours nothing of the purity which marks other portions of Spenser's verse. Little touches of poetic beauty amid details of debauchery and disease hardly serve to redeem the picture from utter loathsomeness.

In greene vine leaves he was right fitly clad,
For other clothes he could not weare for heate;
And on his heade an yvie garland had,
From under which fast trickled downe the sweat
Still as he rode he somewhat still did eat,
And in his hand did beare a bouzing can.

Lechery is a much more difficult character to depict than Gluttony, and it cannot be said that Spenser's delineation of this sin is a very considerable success. It was largely the custom to make Lechery a woman, but he reverses this, and makes him a man who "of ladies oft was loved deare," a reflection upon feminine morality common among Elizabethan poets. He is clad in a "greene gowne," a colour given to Jealousy and to the Evil One, but not very much to Lechery, by the poets. He delights "weake women's hearts to tempt," and with all the scurf of his moral leprosy thick upon him, yet seems to obtain considerable success in his temptings.

In his picture of Avarice, Spenser rises considerably, and almost reaches to the level of William Langland in the same character. He gives his imagination free play, and is full of originality, vivid picturesqueness, and power.

And greedy Avarice by him did ride,
Upon a camel loaden all with gold ;
Two iron coffers hong on either side
With precious metal full as they might hold :
And in his lappe an heap of coins he tolde ;
For of his wicked pelfe his God he made,
And unto hell himselfe for money sold ;
Accursed usury was all his trade,
And right and wrong ylike in equal ballance waide.

His life was nigh unto death's dore yplaste,
And threadbare cote, and cobled shoes hee ware ;
Ne scarse good morsell all his life did taste,
But both from backe and belly still did spare,
To fill his bags, and richesse to compare ;
Yet child ne kinsman living had he none
To leave them to ; but thorough daily care
To get, and nightly feare to lose his owne,
He led a wretched life unto himselfe unknown."

In this description of Avarice we have a first sketch of a character common in fiction and on the stage a hundred years later ; the miser. Glimpses of him are seen in the plays of Ben Jonson, but he does not really reach his full development till the eighteenth century. But his origin is here, in the aimless helpless love of the yellow earth for its own sake, and not for anything it could give or do ; a sordid vice which half wins our pity while it wholly excites our repulsion. The miser appears but rarely in either modern fiction or modern drama : no one has drawn him successfully since Scott depicted miser Trapbois, and Trapbois is a lineal descendant of the Avarice of the Sins. The Vice he stands for has only taken other forms, not departed from our midst. In stanza thirty Envy is described,

riding upon a wolf and chewing with his teeth “a venomous tode,” while in his bosom lurks a snake.

He hated all good workes and vertuous deeds,
And him no less that any like did use ;
And who with gratious bread the hungry feeds,
His almes for want of faith he doth accuse.
So every good to bad he doth abuse ;
And eke the verse of famous Poets’ witt
He does backbite and spightful poison spues
From leprous mouth on all that ever writt.

In the “verse of famous poets’ witt” it cannot be doubted that there is a personal touch. Even in the “spacious times” poets were an envious race, as Spenser knew full well. “Fierce revenging Wrath,” riding upon a lion, carries memories of earlier poetic conceptions ; the description of him casting forth from his eyes “sparkles fiery red” and fingering his knife is reminiscent of William Dunbar : perhaps the most Spenserian verse in the whole description of the Sins is the final one, which pictures Satan driving them all before him with the lash of his whip.

And after all, upon the wagon beame,
Rode Sathan, with a smarting whip in hand,
With which he forward lasht the laesy team,
So oft as Sloth still in the mire did stand,
Huge routs of people did about them band,
Shouting for joy ; and still before their way
A foggy mist had covered all the land :
And underneath their feet all scattered lay
Dead sculls and bones of men whose life had gone astray.

With all the fine human touches, Spenser’s conception of the Sins is less original, and the creatures of his fancy less human than the impersonation of them

given by any of his predecessors, and this of itself marks the beginning of the change. The sins were no longer the cancers of a poisoned soul, they were losing their reality and had no place in the moral perspective of the Elizabethan mind. They belonged to the "superstitions of popery;" and to the poet, they could hardly have been more than abstractions, useful for literary purposes, but having little ethical value.

Spenser's coarse and violent attack on helpless Mary Queen of Scots (in the character of Duessa) is a blot on his great epic. The passage occurs in stanzas 45-50 of Canto viii, Book I, of the "Faerie Queen." It describes, with abundance of loathsome detail, the treatment of Duessa when she becomes the captive of Una and the Redcross Knight, and the parallel between this incident and the captivity of Mary at the hands of Elizabeth is too obvious to be regarded as accidental.

45

Henceforth, Sir Knight, take to you wonted strength
 And maister these mishaps with patient might.
 Loe where your foe lies stretcht in monstrous length ;
 And loe ! that wicked woman in your sight,
 The roote of all your care and wretched plight,
 Now in your powre, to let her live or die.
 "To doe her die" (quoth Una) "were despight,
 And shame t' avenge so weake an enimy ;
 But spoil her of her scarlot robe, and let her fly."

46

So as she bad, that witch they disaraid,
 And robd of roiall robes and purple pall,
 And ornaments that richly were displaid ;
 Ne sparèd they to strip her naked all.

Then, when they had despoyld her tire and call,
 Such as she was their eies might her behold,
 That her misshaped parts did them appall ;
 A loathly wrinkled hag, ill-favoured, old,
 Whose secret filth good manners biddeth not be told.

47

Her crafty head was altogether bald,
 And, as in hate of honorable eld,
 Was overgrown with scurfe and filthy scald ;
 Her teeth out of her rotten gums were feld,
 And her sour breath abhominably smeld ;
 Her driēd dugs, lyke bladders lacking wind,
 Hong downe, and filthy matter from them weld ;
 Her wrizled skin, as rough as maple rind,
 So scabby was that would have loath'd all womankind.

48

Her neather parts, the shame of all her kind,
 My chaster Muse for shame doth blush to write ;
 But at her rompe she growing had behind
 A foxes taile, with dong all fowly dight.

The point about these horrible verses is that they represented with perfect accuracy the feeling of Englishmen towards the Scottish Queen, and there is nothing in them that would not have won applause from the most chivalrous of Elizabeth's gallants. When all has been allowed for the excited state of the public mind, its attitude towards Mary Stuart was barbarous, savage, and inhuman. Her offences concerned her own people not us. She had sought shelter in England and had found a prison ; that she should have used every means possible to regain her liberty was no crime in a captive. Whatever sins had stained her early life were more than atoned for

by her long years of captivity. Mary Stuart, defenceless, alone, and with a whole nation against her, ought to have moved the pity of every generous heart. The final scenes of her life set in a lurid and horrible light the popular religion. The prayer of the Dean of Peterborough on the scaffold when Mary was preparing to die was an exhibition of brutality that would have disgraced a Grand Inquisitor, but no one in England cried shame on him for tormenting a woman in her dying moments, when she was trying to make her peace with God. The following passage from the registers of the Church of St. Christopher-le-Stocks, London, will illustrate another phase of the same wave of popular passion and of moral degradation which had swept across the minds of the English people. "Item, paid for ringing when Babington and other traytors were apprehended and when the Queen of Scotts was beheaded." The concluding word has had a pencil drawn through it, as if the hideousness of the original entry had stirred some conscience when the whole ghastly business was at an end, but the fact remains that the English people lit bonfires, danced and made merry, because a wretched captive, after nineteen years of durance, had been butchered under the form of law, and insulted in her last moments for remaining faithful to that which a couple of generations before was the religion of the nation.

In a poem entitled "Tom Tell Troth's Message," written by John Lane and published in 1600, the Sins appear in processional order; but there is nothing original in their description, everything being imi-

tated or borrowed from Spenser. We may perhaps except the picture of Drunkenness, which, however, is remarkable for little but revolting detail. Lane's poem was written in the lifetime of Elizabeth, who kept her Court free from all the grosser vices. Had it been written six years later, when James I entertained the King of Denmark, the disgusting picture of female drunkenness which he paints might have been seen among the masquers: Sir John Harrington at least relates that when Faith, Hope, and Charity, appeared before their Majesties, Hope was so intoxicated as to be well-nigh speechless, Faith was in a staggering condition, Charity had to hurry out of the hall as quickly as might be, and the goddess Victory "was laid asleep on the outer steps of the antechamber."

Samuel Rowlands, a third-rate, but exceedingly popular humorist who began his literary career in the closing years of Elizabeth's reign by writing sacred poetry, from which later he passed to light verse, in which popular vices of the grosser sort are humourously and realistically depicted, has a short poem entitled "The Seven Deadly Sins, all horsed and riding to Hell." It is found at the close of a series of satirical pamphlets entitled "The Four Knaves," and as the pamphlets were very popular among all classes it is apparent that the idea of the "Seven Deadly Sins" retained its meaning and power of appeal. The pamphlet was probably published in 1612, and frequently reprinted before Commonwealth days, when it seems to have been suppressed. The

ride of the Sins to Hell is told in vigorous rhyme, but the metaphors are all the well-worn ones of the older writers, the only new touch being that Covetousness is represented as riding on an elephant.

Covetousness doth backe an elephant ;
 He of his wealth and mony still doth vaunt,
 And counts his poore (though honest) neighbour base,
 (Although farre richer then himselfe in grace).
 God he neglected for the love of gold,
 His soule for money every day is sold ;
 To scrape and get his care is, night and day,
 And in a moment Death takes all away.

For Shakespeare (1564-1616) the Sins had no dramatic value. He has one direct reference to them, but simply a passing one, in the play of "Measure for Measure," and an indirect reference in the play of "Henry VIII" (if he wrote the passage in which it occurs). In "Measure for Measure," Act III. Scene i. there is a powerful dramatic episode in which Claudio urges his sister Isabella to give up her virtue at the solicitations of Angelo, in order that her brother's life may be spared. It is youth facing death, and his argument is very human if not particularly Catholic. The Sin under consideration is, of course, Lechery, and of it he says:—

Sure it is no sin ;
 Or of the deadly seven it is the least.

Not so would the monks and the fathers of the Church have argued, but Shakespeare is not presenting Claudio as a Catholic, but as a young man to whom life is fair and sweet. Shakespeare really had no intimate knowledge of the Catholic Church, though it is often urged



IRA

P. Bruegel the Younger

otherwise by non-Catholics. He had the faculty, which any man of energy and determination may have in some degree, of getting a swift and complete practical knowledge of any subject he desired to know, and he had it in supreme measure. The secret of his seemingly omniscient knowledge must be found in his universal genius. That is a power which is among the mysteries of nature, and cannot be created by environment or education, and in that power the world has not seen his equal. In "Henry VIII," Act III. Scene ii., there is the episode in the fall of Wolsey, where it would appear that the foundation Sin of Pride is referred to under the name of Ambition:—

Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away Ambition ;
By that sin fell the angels : how can man then,
The image of his Maker, hope to win by it.

Six of the Sins appear, but under classical names, in that curious poetical allegory the "Purple Island," written by Phineas Fletcher (1585?-1650). He was a parish priest who, in addition to being a good minor poet, possessed an accurate knowledge of the science of his day. The "Purple Island" is man, physical and spiritual. The World, the Flesh, and the Vices attack man, and Fido, Faith, is defender. The allegory is confused and incoherent, but it has occasionally fine poetic passages. The old battle between Sense and Soul is fought, largely on the old lines, but there are other enemies besides the Deadly Seven. Heresy is there, and Schism ; nameless Vices become incarnate, and altogether it is "a vagrant rout" which man-

kind in Fletcher's verse has to encounter. *Dichostasis*, or *Schism*, is very manifestly the Church of Rome.

A mitre trebly crowned the impostor wore;
For Heaven, Earth, Hell, he claims with lofty pride;
Not in his lips but hands two keys he bore,
Heaven's doors and Hell's to shut and open wide;
But late his keys are marred or broken quite.

The imagery of the poem is involved and unequal like the poem itself. There are passages full of strength and fire, and there are others which are best described by the modern term "sugary." Elizabethan quaintnesses and conceits abound; the atmosphere is artificial and without life, and its moments of reality are rare. Echoes of Langland, and a very full imitation of Spenser are found in the description of Covetousness, whom the author has named *Pleonectes*.

Next *Pleonectes* went, his gold admiring,
His servant's drudge, slave to his basest slave:
Never enough, and still too much desiring:
His gold his god, yet in an iron grave
Himself protects his god from noisome rusting:
Much fears to keep, much more to lose his lusting,
Himself and golden god and everyone mistrusting.

Age on his hairs the winter snow had spread;
That silver badge his near end plainly proves:
Yet as to earth he nearer bows his head,
So loves it more: for "Like his Like still loves":
Deep from the ground he digs his sweetest gain,
And deep into the earth digs back with pain:
From Hell his god he brings, and hoards in Hell again.

His clothes all patched with more than honest thrift,
And clouted shoes were nailed, for fear of wasting:
Fasting he praised, but sparing was his drift;
And when he eats his food is worse than fasting.

In the description of Envy there is a touch of originality and Elizabethan vigour, even though Spenser had said all that could be said on this particular sin.

Envy the next, Envy with squinted eyes ;
Sick of a strange disease, his neighbours' health ;
Best lives he then, when any better dies ;
Is never poor, but in another's wealth :
On best men's harms and grieve he feeds his fill ;
Else his own maw doth eat with spiteful will :
Ill must the temper be, when diet is so ill.

In the year 1606 there was published a pamphlet written by Thomas Dekker (1575?-1641?), entitled "The Seven Deadly Sins of London ; drawn in seven several coaches through the seven several gates of the city, bringing the plague with them." Dekker has written a pamphlet which is delightful reading, full of vivid and graphic description, and bubbling over with mirth ; but he disregards all the medieval Sins with the exception of Sloth, and introduces other Sins which his readers would probably regard as more modern and up to date. The book is a scathing impeachment of the social life of London, and Dekker, as his plays demonstrate, knew his London well, especially on its under side. Certain passages in the book strikingly resemble Bunyan ; the dramatist in many ways is quite as full of profound religious feeling as the Elstow workman, but his environment was larger, and he had a greater knowledge of men and women, and of the world. Dekker's "Bill of the play" is thus quaintly phrased. "The names of the actors in this old interlude of

iniquity are, Politike Bankruptisme, Lying, Candle Light, Sloth, Apishness, Shaving, Crueltie; seven may easily play this part, but not without a Devil!" The first is an exposure of fraudulent bankrupts, as they were known in the seventeenth century. Candle Light simply refers to sins done after dark and is a badly chosen name altogether; Shaving has a modern equivalent in sweating, and some of Dekker's denunciations, in a slightly varied, form may be heard to-day. Politike Bankruptisme enters the city by Ludgate with a grand display of pageantry, and is thus described:—"Because ye shall believe me, I will give you his length by the scale, and an-atomize his body from head to foote. Heere it is:—Whether he be a tradesman, or a merchant, when he first set himself up, and seekes to get the world into his hands (yet not to go out of ye city), or first talks of countries he never saw (upon Change), he will be sure to keepe his days of paymente more truly than lawyers keepe their termes, or than executors keepe the last lawes that the dead enjoyned them to, which even infidels themselves will not violate; his hand goes to his head, to his meanest customer (to express his humilitie); he is up earlier than a sarjeant, and down later than a constable to proclaime his thrift. By such artificiall wheeles as these he windes himselfe up into the height of rich men's favors till he grow rich himselfe, and when he sees that they dare build upon his credit, knowing the ground to be good, he takes upon him the condition of an asse to any man that will loade him with golde, and useth his credit like a ship

freighted with all sorts of merchandise by venturous pilots ; for after he hath gotten into his hands so much of other men's goods as will fill him to the upper deck, away he sayles with it, and politickly runnes himself on ground, to make the world beleeve he hath suffered shipwreck."

It is only the language here that belongs to the seventeenth century, all else is as applicable to-day as if the writer was contributing to a modern review. It is impossible to say anything about lying that is original, and Dekker does not. Candle Light deals chiefly with the vices of respectable citizens, and his descriptions thereof are characterised by the same fearless and abounding humour that is found in his plays. "The damask-coated citizen, that sat in his shop both forenoon and afternoon, and lookt more sowerly on his poore neighbours than if he had drunk a quart of vineger at a draught, sneakes out of his own doores, and slips into a taverne, where, either alone or with some other that battles their money together, they soe ply themselves with penny pots, which (like small shot) goe off powring into their fat paunches, that at length they have not an eye to see withal nor a good legge to stand upon. In which pickle if ainye of them happen to be justled downe by a post (that in spite of them will take the wall, and so reeles them into the kennell), who takes them up or leades them home? Who has them to bed and with a pillow smothes this stealing so of good liquor, but that brazen-face Candle Light? Nay more he entices their very prentices to make their desperate sallies out, and quicke retyres in

(contrarie to the oath of their indentures which they are seven yeares a swearing), only for their pintes and away. Tush, this is nothing! Yong shopkeepers that have newly ventured upon the pikes of marriage, who are every houre showing their wares to their customers, plying their businesse harder all day than Vulcan does his anvile, and seeme better husbands than fidlers that scrape for a poore living both daye and night, yet even these, if they can but get candle light to sit up all night in any house of reckning (that is to saye in a taverne), they fall roundly to play the London prize, and that 's at three severall weapons, drinking, dauncing, and dicing."

There is hardly a finer piece of writing in all Dekker's prose than the exquisite introduction to the Sin of Sloth. It is full of the true Elizabethan fragrance and fanciful old-world beauty, holding us by its charm as we come to it. "Man doubtless was not created to be an idle fellow, for then he should be God's vagabond; he was made for other purposes than to be ever eating as the swine, ever sleeping as the dormise, ever dumb as fishes in the sea, or ever prating to no purpose as the birdes of the ayr; he was not set in this universalle orcharde to stand still as a tree, but to be cut downe if he should stand still."

Reading Dekker's denunciations of idleness, we obtain a fairly clear insight into seventeenth century social problems. The "sturdy beggars" who were plentiful in London streets, and often made them dangerous at night, receive their full share of his severe condemnations; but they were often only the unemployed of the

time, such as are familiar to readers of both Elizabethan sermons and Elizabethan plays. John Norden, in his "Progress of Piety," 1596, shows how the "sturdy beggars" were created, and bewails that no one will take action to alter things. "If," says Norden, "the city of London be viewed, the streets within it and the suburbs and fields near it will yield of young and old, men and women able of body to serve masters and to labour for their living, a great number of vagabonds. And, which is most lamentable, the young and tender girls and lads of all ages lie under the stalls in the streets by great companies, under hedges in the fields, and no man taketh them up to bring them to some faculty to get their living, as is commanded, but suffer them to wallow still in idleness until they be past to be reclaimed, falling into breaches of the laws, and so are eaten up with untimely death; who, if they had been carefully provided for, they might have proved good members of the weal public." When it is remembered that, in addition to these classes, absolutely nothing was done for the disbanded soldier or discharged sailor, it will be realised that there was another side to the "golden days of good Queen Bess," which has been considerably overlooked by the historian.

Nevertheless Dekker's description of Sloth in his litter is perfect of its kind. "A couple of unshodde asses carry it betweene them; it is all sluttishly overgrown with mosse on the outside, and on the inside quilted throughout with downe pillowes: Sleep and Plenty leads the fore asse, a pursie double-chind Laena, riding by on a sumpter horse with provander

at his mouth, and she is the litter driver ; she keeps two pages, and those are an Irish beggar on the one side, and one that says he has been a soldier on the other side. His attendants are Sickness, Want, Ignorance, Infamy, Bondage, Paleness, Blockishness, and Carelessness. The retayners that wear his cloth are anglers, dumb ministers, players, exchange wenches, gamesters, panders, whores, and fiddlers."

In apishness he seems to be attacking that comparatively harmless, if also useless, personage the fop, and attacking him for Puritan reasons only. Dekker can be severe enough on the Puritan when he chooses, but he shows his sympathies with them in this fine piece of description from the chapter on apishness. " Man is God's ape, and an ape is zani to a man, doing over those tricks (especially if they be knavish) which he sees done before him, so that apishness is nothing but counterfeiting or imitation ; and this flower, which, when it first came into the Citie, had a prettie scent, and a delightful colour, hath been let to runne so high that it is now seeded, and where it falls there rises up a stinking weede."

Henry Constable, a poet of repute of the same period as Dekker (1562-1613), and a staunch adherent of the Catholic faith, who in 1595 had to flee from England because of his loyalty to his Church, gives us the Sins in a love sonnet. He was one of the group of Elizabethan sonnetters, but most of his poetry was of an intensely religious kind. In his sonnet dealing with the Sins, the Seven are simply named ; but the Catholic writer puts them in their ancient order, and knows nothing

of the changes or the variations given to them by the Protestant poet or pamphleteer.

Mine eye with all the Deadly Sins is fraught :
First Proud, sith it presumed to look so high.
A watchman being made, stood gazing by,
And Idle took no heed till I was caught :
And Envious bears envy that by thought
Should, in his absence, be to her so nigh.
To kill my heart mine eye let in her eye,
And so consent gave to a murder wrought.
And Covetous it never would remove
From her fair hair ; gold so doth please his sight !
Unchaste, a bawd between my heart and love ;
A Glutton eye, with tears drunk every night.
These Sins procuréd have a Goddess' Ire ;
Wherfore my heart is damned in Love's sweet fire.

CHAPTER VII.

Exeunt the Sins.

IT is in the period of the Civil War, and amid the savage strife of the Puritan uprising, that the Sins pass out of English Literature. Their final appearance is in a little volume of devotion over which a fierce and bitter controversy raged. It was published in 1627, its author being John Cosin (1594-1671), who afterwards became Bishop of Durham, and it was entitled “A Collection of Private Devotions: in the practice of the ancient Church called the Hours of Prayer, as they were after this manner published by authority of Queen Elizabeth, taken out of the Holy Scriptures, the ancient fathers, and the divine services of our own Church.” It is a beautiful little book, marked by both piety and learning, and full of the fragrance of a pure and lofty faith. But Cosin was known to be a friend of the King and of Laud, was a devout and loyal churchman, and one of the greatest scholars of the time; and so the Puritan faction smelt Popery in the innocent little volume of prayers and psalms. How it was received is told by Peter Heylin in his life of Laud, in the following passage: “About this time (1627) also came out a book entitled ‘A Collection of Private Devotions or the Hours of Prayer,’ composed by Cosen, one of the prebends of Durham,

at the request, and for the satisfaction, as was then generally believed, of the Countess of Denbigh, the only sister of the Duke, and then supposed to be unsettled in the religion here established, if not warping from it. A book which had in it much good matter, but not well pleasing in the form."

The reputation of Peter Heylin for accuracy is markedly indifferent, and his statement that the book was written, or rather compiled, for the benefit of the Countess of Denbigh is entirely contrary to fact. Cosin himself told the story of its origin to John Evelyn, some twenty years later, as will be shown presently. But Heylin, although he may have been ignorant of the reason for its appearance, knows all about the controversy which the book aroused. He continues, "the book was approved by Mountain, then Bishop of London, and by him licensed for the press, with the subscription of his own hand to it. Which notwithstanding, it startled many at first, who, otherwise very moderate and sober men, looked upon it as a preparatory to usher in the superstitions of the Church of Rome. The title gave offence to some by reason of the correspondence it held with the Popish Horaries; but the frontispiece a great deal more, on the top whereof was found the name of Jesus figured in three capitals (I. H: S.) with a cross upon them encircled with the sun, supported by two angels, with two devout women praying towards it." His description of the title page is very accurate, and looking at the quaint and pretty little frontispiece to-day it is hardly possible to avoid a feeling of contempt for the bitter-

souled sectaries who saw nothing but evil where the intention was nothing but good. The book was savagely attacked by both Prynne and Burton. Burton's book attracted but little notice; it is a very feeble performance and called for none, but it was far otherwise with that of William Prynne. He was a man of striking ability and dogged tenacity of purpose, but his nature was cold, hard, and unsympathetic to the last degree, and he was without mercy for those who had the temerity to think differently from himself. Samuel Rawson Gardiner says of him, "He had no formative genius, no broad culture, no sense of the relative importance of things distasteful to him." He held it to be the duty of the State, or of Parliament, "to establish the true religion in our church, to abolish and suppress all false, all new and counterfeit doctrines whatever," and in that spirit he approached the criticism of this harmless little volume.

The title of Prynne's book is "A brief Censure and Survey of Cozens, his Cozening Devotions, Anno. 1628." It contains twice as much matter as the book he attacks, and is very wearisome reading in these days when book and controversy alike are forgotten. His style of criticism would have commended him to Jef-fery, if it had been a little more scholarly, and he had lived in the days of the Edinburgh Review. His reading had been wide, if not deep, and his power of making a mountain out of a molehill would have made him an invaluable critic of political ideas had he lived in our own time. He takes the book page by page in the most systematic way and finds Popery in every



line. “Matins” and “Evensong” are Popish words, and he was on sure ground when he came to the Seven Deadly Sins. Cosin makes no comment on them whatever. He simply puts them down in their order as things to be avoided, as he sets down the Seven Virtues as things to be commended and followed, but does not utter a single word of a doctrinal or other character concerning them. Nevertheless Prynne brings all his heavy artillery to bear on them, and from his standpoint, proves Cosin to be a rank Papist. He says; “From this we descend to the ensuing point, that there are some sins which are but venial, not mortal in their own nature, which is evidently deduced from this passage: ‘Seven Deadly Sins, 1, Pride; 2, Covetousness; 3, Luxury; 4, Envy; 5, Gluttony; 6, Anger; 7, Sloth’; which as it is directly stolen out of ‘Our Lady’s Primer’; ‘Ledesma, his Catechism,’ cap. 14; ‘The Houres of our Lady,’ printed at Paris, 1556, fol. 345; ‘Bellarmine’s Christian Doctrine,’ cap. 19; ‘Otium Spirituale,’ by Mathias Ceschi, page 122, and other Popish pamphlets, catechisms, and devotions, and not out of any Protestant authors, so it necessarily implies that these Seven Sins are the greater sins of all others, and that there are some sins which are not deadly in their own nature; for so do the Popish writers infer from them: whence it is that after they have discoursed of these Seven Deadly Sins, they then fall immediately to dispute of venial sins, which venial sins our own and all other Protestant Churches do renounce. Neither is this in any way salved by the clause ‘as they are com-

monly so called,' which our author (conscious no doubt to himself of his own guilt) hath added to his later impressions. For these are nowhere commonly called the Seven Deadly Sins but among Turks and Papists, not among Protestants. Whence 'Our Lady's Primer,' and 'James Ledesma the Jesuit, his Catechism,' cap. 14, speaking of these Seven Sins, give them this superscription, 'the seven capital Sins commonly called deadly,' so that our authors later edition, which renders it not 'Deadly Sins' as his first impression doth, but 'Seven Deadly Sins, as they are commonly so called,' doth rather more than mend his cause, because it is now more suitable to 'Ledesma' and 'Our Lady's Primer,' than before, and so more likely to infer this Popish conclusion, that there are some Sins that are but venial in their nature, which Protestants do quite renounce."

The passage relating to "Turks and Papists" raises a most interesting point for discussion. On the face of it the reference appears to be a mere gibe at Catholicism, animated by a desire to link it with everything which, in the opinion of William Prynne, appeared to be bad. But on the other hand there is, according to Sale, a tradition that Mohammed taught there were seven "grievous Sins" which were, idolatry, murder, false accusations of adultery brought against honest women, wasting the substance of orphans, taking of usury, desertion in a religious expedition, and disobedience to parents. There are references to "grievous Sins" in the Koran, but they are nowhere classed as seven in number. Prynne knew a good many things: did

he know of this tradition? It is most unlikely, for very few people in England in the middle of the seventeenth century knew anything about the religion of Mohammed; but it is not impossible.

The attack on the little book did it no special harm among those whose intellectual outlook was wider than that of Prynne; indeed, according to Heylin, it seems to have done it good, for he says; "But for all this violent opposition, and the great clamour made against it, the book grew up into esteem, and justified itself without any advocate, insomuch that many of those who first startled at it in regard of its title, found in the body of it so much piety, such regular forms of divine worship, such necessary consolations in special exigencies that they reserved it by them as a jewel of great price and value."

The book passed through many editions, but in those published after the author's death, the offending title page was replaced by one which seems to have satisfied both the orthodoxy and the prejudice of the time. The name of Jesus, the cross and the praying women were superseded by the Royal coat of arms; and although the text was not tampered with, the book had now an air of commonplace respectability which no doubt helped it presently to pass out of notice altogether. As a matter of fact Cosin himself was a very staunch and loyal Protestant, of the two a better one than William Prynne, as the latter in his closing years was deep in the confidences of his most Catholic Majesty Charles II, while Cosin, who became the greatest ecclesiastic of his time, sturdily defended the

Protestantism of the English Church. On the first of October, 1661, after morning service at the Chapel Royal, Cosin was dining with Evelyn, to whom he confided the real story of the origin of the book. In 1627, when the "Devotions" were first issued, Queen Henrietta Maria had resolved to have none but Roman Catholic waiting women about her person, being apprehensive of Puritan spies. This meant the dismissal from Court of ladies of noble birth, and Cosin had apparently felt it his duty to condole with them.

The incident as related by Evelyn (Oct. 1, 1651), is as follows:—"The Dean of Peterborough, Dr. Cosin, preached on Job xiii. 15, encouraging our trust in God on all events and extremities, and for establishing and comforting some ladies of great quality, who were then to be discharged from our Queen Mother's service, unless they would go over to the Romish Mass.

"The Dean dining this day at our house, told me the occasion of publishing those offices, which among the Puritans were wont to be called 'Cosin's cozening devotions' by way of derision. At the first coming of the Queen into England, she and her French ladies were often upbraiding our religion, that had neither appointed nor set forth any hours of prayer or breviaries by which the ladies and courtiers, who have much spare time, might edify and be in devotion, as they had. Our Protestant ladies, scandalised it seems at this, moved in the matter to the King, whereupon his Majesty presently called Bishop White to him, and asked his thoughts of it, and whether there might not be found some forms of prayer proper on such occa-

sions, collected out of some already approved forms, so that the Court ladies and others (who spend much time in trifling) might at least appear as devout and be so as the new-come-over French ladies, who took occasion to reproach our want of zeal and religion. On which the Bishop told his Majesty it might be done easily and was very necessary: whereupon the King commanded him to employ some person of the clergy to compile such a work, and presently the Bishop naming Dr. Cosin, the King enjoyned him to charge the Doctor in his name to set about it immediately. This the Dean told me he did, and three months after bringing the book to the King, he commanded the Bishop of London to read it over and make his report; this was so well liked that (contrary to former custom of doing it by a chaplain) he would needs give it an *imprimatur* under his own hand. Upon this there were at first only two hundred copies printed; 'nor,' said he, 'was there anything in the whole book of my own composure, nor did I set any name as author to it, but those necessary prefaces, &c., out of the Fathers, touching the times and seasons of prayer; all the rest being entirely translated and collected out of an office published by the authority of Queen Elizabeth in 1560, and our own Liturgy.' This I rather mentioned to justify that learned and pious Dean, who had exceedingly suffered by it as if he had done it of his own head to introduce Popery, from which no man was more averse, and one who in this time of temptation held and confirmed many to our Church."

In this controversy, a quarrel of mighty import from the seventeenth century point of view, but a mere tempest in a teacup from ours, the Seven Deadly Sins take their final leave of English literature. For more than six centuries we find them a living and vitalising force in the intellect of our nation, stirring the imagination and arousing the conscience of poet, preacher and playwright alike. The essential verity of their idea neither the subtleties of the theologians nor the criticisms of the philosophers could obscure or gainsay. If they have gone from literature, they have not gone from life : still they lurk like foul vampires in its caverns and its darkened forests, still in their moments of daring and of strength we may behold them dancing their old and hideous dance.

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